

Embracing curiosity and connectedness

- Community centre art projects and emancipation in Johannesburg

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<p>Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract</p> <p>This study discusses the importance of artistic practices and community arts centres for development understood as a process of social and individual emancipation. Specifically, the study looks at emancipation from the point of view of overcoming social and psychological hindrances to the autonomy of an individual. The empirical case under scrutiny is a community centre in Johannesburg, South Africa, its arts and crafts project (ACP) and one of its drama projects. The study asks, what is the role of the projects in project participants' lives, and what kinds of spaces the projects are. Initially, I assumed that the role of the creative action taking place in the projects, as critical theory suggests, would be substantial for the participants, because of the "learning by doing" taking place in the projects, and because of bigger "ownership" of one's own doing, when compared to, for example, school environments.</p> <p>The research material is derived from 18 interviews, observations, written products of the projects, and my field and research diaries, which compose the <i>text</i> for hermeneutic analysis. The research questions were developed and further answered through a hermeneutic process of dialogue with this <i>text</i>. The analysis results in new 'facts' that answer the research questions, as is the nature of results in hermeneutic studies.</p> <p>These <i>facts</i>, or, the findings, support the assumption about the importance of the method of learning by doing, and ownership of one's doing, but turn the emphasis towards the social context of the projects. The projects had a great impact in the project participants' lives in two intertwined spheres. These are: 1) sphere of learning, and 2) sphere of "feeling at home". The projects enhanced the participants' feeling of freedom. One of the main reasons for this was the non-discriminatory social environment of the projects, especially regarding non-discrimination based on socio-economic class. In the study, I argue that both projects contributed to the emancipation of their participants.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of <i>development as emancipation</i>, which is discussed with the empirical part of the study, is founded on the Freirean concept of <i>humanisation</i>, the <i>capabilities approach</i> as developed by Martha Nussbaum, and the idea of <i>orienting towards objects</i> formulated by Sara Ahmed. The study is an addition to the recent body of research on community arts centres in South Africa, conducted by South African researchers such as Gerard Hagg, Eben Lochner, Thamsanqa Mzaku, and Zanele Madiba.</p>			
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Reading instructions

Anonymity

People: I have changed names of all the people in this study, apart from myself, to maintain the anonymity of the project participants. The names given to the research participants, the pseudonyms, are chosen from a long list of male and female names from different ethnic groups provided to me by the drama group members. I have tried to use names from different ethnic groups to reflect the proportion of members from various ethnic groups in the projects. However, in order to maintain anonymity of individual participants, I have assigned pseudonyms to the interviewees randomly: an Ndebele might – or might not – have an Ndebele name, and a Tsonga might – or might not, have an English name. Thus, the names used do not reflect the participants' ethnic backgrounds. I acknowledge that the ethnic background of the participants may play a role in their experience of the projects and life in Johannesburg, and that for a reader literate about the ethnic politics in South Africa it might be more informative to know from which ethnic groups the participants come from. However, assigning names to the participants along their real ethnic backgrounds would have undermined the attempt to anonymise them.

The projects: I have anonymized the projects and the community centre in this research report. I have tried to make the project non-identifiable by omitting certain information which is not necessary for understanding the research context (like the exact location of the community centre). The reason for anonymizing the community centre lies in the ethical principle of not doing harm to the research subjects. Even though I do not anticipate the research will cause harm to the projects and its people, should such an unfortunate situation develop, it would then be too late to anonymize the project.

The markings in the interview transcriptions

[...]

Some words or sounds have been omitted

[words within brackets]

Words within brackets are added by me to replace a word that would make a person or the projects recognizable, to clarify what the person was talking about for example if the interview question has been omitted, or to describe the tone of the speaker.

... Three dots in the interview extracts represents a remarkable pause in the speech.

- Hyphen after a word or part of a word means the speech was interrupted, or the speaker stopped mid-way. Hyphen before a word means that the speaker continued from where they stopped earlier.

Italics A word in italics was emphasized in speech.

Bold In the interviews where there was only me and one interviewee, my lines are in bold, and the interviewee's lines are not.

- Interviews with more than one interviewee: In the interviews with two or three interviewees, the names of the interviewer and the interviewees are mentioned the first time each of them speaks, and the first letter of the name is used to indicate the speaker in the following lines.
- Long quotations from a single interview: When I have used a long quotation from a single interview, I have indented the extract and used a smaller font than in the regular text.
- Mostly, I have retained the phrasing of words in their original forms when using extracts from the interview transcriptions. Sometimes, however, I have corrected some grammar or omitted certain sounds, like repetitive “like”-words to improve text readability. This applies both to the wordings of the interviewee's and to my own speech. If I have added something to the extract which was not originally there, I have put that into square brackets. Square brackets are also used, if something is omitted from the middle of a quotation. In that case, three dots are placed within the brackets.

Abbreviations

ACP	Arts and Crafts project
BBC	The British Broadcasting Company
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
DAC	Department of Arts and Culture
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UN	The United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1 Introduction

Development priorities such as housing, health care, infrastructure, etc. which deny the importance of culture generally and art in particular and which are not linked fundamentally to human rights and democracy, still regard people in two-thirds of the world as essentially physical entities with little, if any, emotional, intellectual, aesthetic or psychological needs...The non-prioritisation of culture and the arts in development perpetuates....the lack of artistic skills and resources for the majority to find and maintain identity, to make meaning of their world and to articulate their aspirations, fears and ideas...if development is designed to overcome the legacies of colonialism and apartheid, then it must have its philosophical premise, not self-serving economic or political interests, but of human beings as holistic and equals...

(Mike van Graan 1991, quoted in Lochner 2010, 137)

1.1 Background

During the last decade, young people have become the focus of both national and international policies and programmes. As an example, the “Office of the Secretary General’s Envoy on Youth” was established in 2013 to “address the needs and rights of young people”, and the UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon has made “working with and for young one of his top priorities in his Five Year Action Agenda” (United Nations 2017). In Africa, the African Union Constitutive Act and the African Union Commission strategic plan 2004-2007 prioritized “youth development and youth empowerment”. The African Union developed a policy framework “African Youth Charter” in 2006, which stated youth policy responsibilities for the Member States (African Union 2006). Currently Africa is the “most youthful” continent on the globe. In South Africa, two thirds of the population of nearly 56 million, are youth under 35 years of age, and every fourth South African is aged 15-24 (StatSA, Mid-year population estimate 2016). According to the OECD, the youth unemployment rate in South Africa was at 50.1 per cent last year (OECD 2017).

The focus on youth is partly due to the increased challenges of accommodating new generations into the existing labour markets and social security systems. Mass media has in recent times discussed these issues in articles such as: “Africa’s youth: a ticking time bomb or an opportunity?” (Ighobor 2013), and “Head-to-head: Is Africa’s young population a risk or an asset (BBC 2014). With high levels of youth unemployment and newly risen extremist groups attracting young members, there is both a real and partly imagined threat facing societies with high numbers of young people as they participate in the current global economic system, which unfortunately cannot accommodate all the young people into its “machinery”, and provide all of them with meaningful and reasonably paid work. That the economic system cannot take in the high population of young people is demonstrated by the fact that *youth* has become a time of “waithood” (Honwana 2014), a prolonged state of being in between childhood and adulthood, adulthood being marked by economic self-sustainability and establishing a family. An increasing number of young people all over the world cannot afford to marry or build a family (see for example Singerman 2008; The Telegraph 2011; Korea Times 2015).

Youth unemployment has been widely studied in development studies and development economics (see for example Resnick and Thurlow 2015; Lam, Leibbrandt and Mlatsheni 2009). While youth unemployment amongst 15-24-year-old South Africans is as high as 50.1 per cent (OECD 2017), the youth who are not working, are doing something else. In face of the seeming mismatch of job opportunities for youth and the socio-economic needs of young people, this research looks at the lives of some of the so-called youth¹ from the perspective of a typical activity among South African youth – being involved in a programme in a community centre.

My initial interest in this research was sparked by the problematics of choosing an artistic career in today’s political economy, where artistic and humanistic career paths are ever less valued, while high-technology and hard sciences are receiving more and

¹ “Youth” is a contested concept. Different institutions define it differently: the OECD defines youth as 15-24-year-olds, while the South Africa’s National Youth Policy 2009-2014 defines youth as persons from 15 to 34 of age (UNFPA 2016) , and the United nations between 15 and 24 years of age, apart from its “African Youth Charter”, which defines youth as “every person between the ages 15 and 35 years”. Qualitatively, youth has been defined as “as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community” (UNESCO 2016).

more funding in national budgets (Nussbaum 2010). I call the theoretical approach in this study “humanizing development”, as opposed to development thinking where human beings are reduced to mere physical beings.

Development cooperation and politics are faced with urgent challenges. In spite of seven decades of development cooperation, the world is facing the biggest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War (United Nations, in BBC 2017). For a long time, development politics has concentrated on overcoming material constraints to development. The concept of a human is easily reduced to a physical being who needs nutrition, shelter, and physical health. Even though education, gender equality, and issues of citizenship and belonging have gained increasing attention in the development agenda from the 1990s onwards, a more holistic understanding, that includes psychological, emotional, social, artistic and aesthetic needs of a human, has not been readily visible in international development programmes. Eben Lochner (2013, 136) asks, how can the statement of the South African white paper on arts and culture, that “arts, culture and heritage have a vital role to play in development, nation building, and sustaining our emerging democracy” materialize, when South African township schools seriously lack “any form of art education”. The lack of attention to arts and creative practices in development programmes and practice is reflected in development research, where the impact of such endeavours on promoting wellbeing has not been studied enough.

This lack of attention to non-material aspects of development, such as removal of psychological and social barriers, led me to focus on arts and creativity as vehicles for emancipation. The position of art, understood as an aesthetic and emotional endeavour, in a development setting is particularly interesting. Making art can be seen as a political act per se, resisting the dehumanizing attempts to reduce human beings into mere objects of the material economy (Oinas, Onodera, and Suurpää 2017). By participating in the creation of art, one can be seen as claiming the artistic and aesthetic side of being human.

1.2 Aim

This study aims to contribute to the literature on the importance of artistic practices and community arts centres in development. I understand development as a process of social and individual emancipation, as elaborated in chapter three. Through field work inspired by grounded theory, the research questions were narrowed down to those concerning emancipation, learning, and social environment in the previously mentioned community centre projects.

This study participates in discussions about the significance of community arts projects to their participants, and through that, to a wider society. Recent studies have dealt with the impact of community arts on the audiences (Kelaheer et al. 2014), as well as that of community theatre on the career paths of the participants (Mzaku 2013). Zanele Suzan Madiba (2016) has studied the impact of a theatre art festival in a community theatre in Hillbrow, Johannesburg, on the participants' appreciation of arts and culture and their attitudes about Hillbrow. Eben Lochner (2013) has studied the Cape Town Community Arts Project (CAP) of 1977-2008 and community arts centres in relation to how they have addressed the educational and cultural problems of the country. Gerard Hagg has written extensively about community arts centres in South Africa, specifically from the point of view of art centres contributing to the socio-economic development in the country (Hagg 2002), and the relationship between community arts centres and state policies (Hagg 2010). This study, like those by Kelaheer et. al. (2014), Matarasso (2003), and Mzaku (2013), emphasises the importance of socially supportive environment of community arts projects for the project participants. This study looks at the real-world impacts of community art centres from the perspective of development research.

1.3 Research questions

This research started from an interest towards art as a political act, manifesting resistance to dehumanizing attempts to reducing human beings into mere objects of the material economy. Instead of looking at professional artists, this study looks at

young people in community centre art projects, and the role creative action and the community centre enabling this action, play in their lives. The specific projects under scrutiny are one of the centre's drama projects, and its arts and crafts project.

Methodologically, this research is inspired by grounded theory, which avoids specific, pre-determined research questions prior to field work. Naturally, even in grounded theory approach, both academic and lay theories influence where a researcher orients their gaze in the field, and how the field is chosen. In this study, these theories framed the theme of the study to that of creative, artistic action, and the location of the research to a community centre, where creative artistic action is practiced. More specific research questions arose along the way. The more specific questions are discussed chapter 5. The open-ended, initial research questions this research asks and answers in the context of the arts and crafts, and drama projects, are:

- What kind of effects does participating in these creative projects have in the lives of the young participants?
- What kind of possibilities these projects provide for their participants, and what are their limitations?

1.4 Empirical study

The study is based on a two-month field work in a community centre in the inner city of Johannesburg, South Africa. Johannesburg is South Africa's biggest city, and among the 100 most highly populated cities in the world (United Nations 2014). The field work in Johannesburg took place in October-December 2014, which was a year of the "20 years of democracy" remembrance. Most of the participants of the study are so called *free-borns*, meaning they were born after the official end of apartheid in 1994. During these years, South Africa and Johannesburg have undergone a tremendous transformation, which continues to this day. One aspect of the transformation is migration to the cities, which accelerated after 1994, when restrictions to black people's migration were abolished. The phenomenon of internal migration is seen also in this study, as most of the projects' participants or their families had moved to Johannesburg after 1994 from smaller towns and villages. This research looks at two

community centre arts projects and the youth they cater to in an economically deprived neighbourhood in central Johannesburg.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

In the next chapter, chapter 2, we look at the connection of arts and development through a literature review of how these have been studied together and separately. Chapter 3 introduces the theoretical framework of the thesis: development as emancipation. Emancipation is looked at in connection to learning, self-actualisation, capabilities approach and emancipatory spaces. Chapter 4 introduces the community centre arts projects and the hermeneutic approach to methodology, and discusses the methods employed and research ethics. Chapter 5 presents the findings of the study. The chapter discusses findings that are specific to the two projects, projects in comparison, and projects as spaces where the participants felt “at home”. Chapter six summarises the main insights of the study in connection to theory, methodology, and earlier research, and suggests topics for further inquiry.

2 Art and Development

In this literature review, I look more closely at research on South African community arts centres, and at how theatre and arts and crafts have been studied within development studies. While NGOs and civil society have been studied comprehensively in development studies (for the discussions on NGOs’ role in development, see for example (D. J. Smith 2010; Englund 2006; Pearce 2000; White 2000; Firoze and O’coill 2002), community arts centres have not been of so much interest to the development scholars. Community centres have been studied within the field of “community development” (see for example Riches 1971) – a practice-based profession and academic field concerned with the “organization, education and empowerment of people within their communities” (IACD 2017). The difference between the themes of this study and “community development” approach is that this research asks universal questions inspired by a local, time-specific context, and connects the field study to the theoretical framework of global development.

2.1 Arts in political rhetoric

Historically community art has sought to contribute to civic dialogue by provoking a deeper understanding of social issues. Through social and civic imaginings, community-based arts groups shift the personal into the public realm, where experiences are shared with a broader audience. This position at the nexus of the personal and the private means that community art can enable pathways for civic dialogue. (Kelaheer et al. 2014, 133)

In the contemporary world, especially in the political sphere of the West, arts are perceived as having socially “transformative powers”, which is why the arts have increasingly garnered attention as a policy tool for the policy makers. In the UK, arts, both when perceived by an audience, and when been created by target groups, is hoped to provide solutions to social problems of exclusion, criminal behaviour, educational underachievement, and health issues. (Belfiore 2011; Mirza 2006.) A similar manifestation can also be found also in the South African government’s Department of Arts and Culture web-site, where the first chapter under the title “Arts & Culture” states that:

The aim of the Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) is to contribute to sustainable economic development and enhance job creation by preserving, protecting and developing South African arts, culture and heritage to sustain a socially cohesive and democratic nation. Together with the cultural and creative industries sectors, the DAC is committed to ensure that the arts sector contributes to inclusive economic growth and social cohesion. (South African Government 2016.)

The DAC emphasises the arts and culture as arenas that contribute to the economy, by contributing to “economic development”, “job creation”, and to the society’s social cohesion and democratization processes. “Preserving, protecting and developing South African arts” is mentioned, but not as ends in themselves, but as means to economic development and job creation. While this approach is understandable in a society with high rates of poverty and unemployment, it seems to reproduce the idea that

development can only occur and be measured in monetary terms. Munira Mirza, who has studied political debate about arts in the UK, suggests that there is a consensus in the public speech, produced by the people who fund the arts, who provide the arts, and who research the arts, that the arts are good for society. In line with this, arts have been instrumentalised to help achieve a number of social policy objectives. (Mirza 2006.)

In this rhetoric, creativity is employed to the enhancement of competitive national economy by producing knowledgeable, flexible, responsible, and innovative people, who have developed these very skills through the arts. (Banaji 2011, 39). Shakuntala Banaji speaks about the importance of revealing cultural politics behind using the term “creativity”. As claims are made for creative action to advance social harmony, so are claims for neo-liberal economics, as well as ‘democratic society’ and individual ‘empowerment’ (Banaji 2011, 42).

In addition to different rhetorics of creativity aimed producing productive, cohesive societies, in the field of arts, creativity is often connected to the idea of questioning and thinking differently from what is habitual:

For me creativity is suddenly seeing the world in a new way, and I suppose personally that [is] for me so beneficial, so exciting [...], and the discovery of the self and, yeah, it's about the world expanding. For me it's about provocation, it's about provoking, it's about questioning, it is about being allowed to question. And that is a hard one, because children, I think on the whole in our country, are not allowed to question. (Harry, the theatre director in the community arts centre, in an interview)

2.2 Transformative power of arts

François Matarasso and his team conducted a profound research on the social impact of amateur and community arts programmes in the UK, Helsinki and New York. In their study of 90 arts projects, ranging from museum outreach programmes to festival organizing projects, they found that participating in arts programmes supported personal and community development, and amongst other things, “lead[s] to

enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments”, “contribute[s] to social cohesion”, “brings benefits in other areas such as environmental renewal and health promotion” and “produces social change which can be seen” (Matarasso 2003, Summary). Matarasso’s study grouped the impact of participating in art projects into six categories, which were: 1) personal development, 2) social cohesion, 3) community empowerment and self-determination, 4) local image and identity, 5) imagination and vision, and 6) health and well-being. They found that participating in the arts positively influenced the lives of the art participants in all of these areas. (Matarasso 2003, chapter 2.) The benefits of the projects were wide:

In some cases [...] people feel they have gained more control over how they are seen by friends and family. In others, the arts work has provided groups with an opportunity to think about their rights and social responsibilities. Most participants have gained practical and social skills which they feel will help them in their working and home lives. Teachers identified educational benefits to schoolchildren in several areas including language development, creativity and social skills. (Matarasso 2003, Summary)

In Matarasso’s study, 80 per cent of the surveyed research participants said they had become more confident because of making art. The participants did not usually explain the increased confidence with arts *per se*, but with the “life and the situations it throws up”, and with their changed perception of their capacities to handle new situations (Matarasso 2003, chapter 3.2). “Participants repeatedly stressed the value of a supportive and co-operative atmosphere, where everyone’s efforts and ideas were appreciated” (ibid.). The appreciation of the supportive environment in the projects was important almost in all the 90 projects of the study, regardless of the nature of the project. Other overarching results of artistic involvement Matarasso’s study found were that the participants were encouraged to try new things (88 per cent of the respondents had tried something they had not done before, being encouraged by the project), they made new friendships (92 per cent of the respondents), and that they “[found] their voice or, perhaps, the courage to use it” (ibid. chapter 3.4). Some of the results were more specific. For example, in a study of Muslim women in Batley,

Naseem Khan found that the women felt their status in the family and community was growing thanks to the project. (Ibid. chapter 4.3)

It can be said that arts and creativity are employed for social policy objectives, both for “soft development” such as social cohesion and democracy and for “hard development”, such as producing productive, flexible workers. Matarasso’s extensive research shows that participating in art programmes can indeed have a strong positive impact on the participants, irrespective of the type of art.

2.3 South African Community Art Centres

In apartheid South Africa, community art centres, run by civil society from the 1960s onwards, played a major role in providing art education and practice facilities for blacks, who were denied access to arts education in the Bantu schooling system. Not only in primary schools, but also in higher education, blacks had no opportunity to study art, and to become professionally qualified artists. The arts as a profession was preserved for whites, and there were hardly any artistic recreational activities available for black youth outside of the community centres. (Hagg 2002; Mzaku 2013; Hagg 2010) Urban black communities had even less facilities than blacks in the so-called homelands, where the apartheid government expected blacks to spend most of their time. Ballet, opera and other “high culture” was considered whites’ art, while “black art consisted of crafts, dance and curios” (Hagg 2010, 165). The political position of community arts centres often varied: while many of them were openly anti-apartheid, some of them claimed to be neutral. The common denominator between the centres was that they brought together professional and amateur artists by providing spaces to practice art, networks, and an encouraging environment. Many artists found clients, galleries, and theatre competitions through the centres. The ideas of critical pedagogy, radical reform, community reform and politics of learning, advocated by the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), influenced the community art movement to a great extent (Hagg 2002.)

Eben Lochner writes that the arts in the 1970s and 1980s community art centres were sites of nuanced struggle, inspired by the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). Even though there was pressure to make overtly political art, like posters, the main struggle for the BCM was personal transformation, to find and cherish the dignity and self-worth of South African black communities under an oppressive political system. (Lochner 2013; Magaziner 2010.)

Some of the art centres were started by white people who wanted to contribute to radical change in South Africa, and radical white academics played a big role in the community arts movement during the apartheid era. (Hagg 2002; Lochner 2013.) In general, the relationship between the art centres and the apartheid state varied considerably (Hagg 2010; Lochner 2013). Lize van Robbroeck, in her widely cited study (see Lochner 2010; Hagg 2010; Mzaku 2013; Madiba 2016) found that the Kathalong Art Centre which was introduced as an “apolitical” art centre upon its establishment in the early 1980s, in order to avoid appearing threatening to the apartheid government, received generous government funding, while the Alexandra Art Centre, which refused to accept government funding, was often harassed by the government (van Robbroeck 1991, in Madiba 2016, 33). On the one hand, art centres under the apartheid era were spaces for black resistance and enhancement of black identity, inspired, amongst others, by the Black Consciousness Movement. On the other hand, some of the centres were seen as ‘redresses’ of the apartheid government. (Madiba 2016).

In the White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage from 1996, the South African government addressed the issue of lack of arts education for most South Africans:

The Ministry will actively promote the Constitutional right of every learner in the General Education and Training Phase to access equitable, appropriate life-long education and training in arts, culture and heritage to develop individual talents and skills through the transformation of arts education within the formal school system and the development and extension of community based arts education structures. The rich and diverse expression of

South African arts, culture and heritage shall thereby be promoted and developed. (Republic of South Africa 1996)

The new South African government established a socio-economic policy framework known as the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), within which 42 community arts centres and libraries were built or renovated in poor black townships throughout the country between 1996 and 2000. The centres were largely funded by international donors. (Hagg 2002, 2010). In addition to these 42 centres, there have been independent community art centers, like the one Thamsanqa Mzaku studies, as well as the one in focus in this study. (Mzaku 2013). Most community arts centres, and consequently, most studies about community arts centres, have been located in the areas with high percentage of black residents, such as rural areas and townships (Madiba 2016). As Madiba states, concentrating on the township community centres “overlooks the contribution of urban spaces as other possible locations to host arts centres” (Madiba 2016, 26). This study hopes to bridge this gap by focusing on a community arts centre located in an urban area.

Thamsanqa Mzaku (2013) has studied the effects of participating in a drama group in the Johannesburg Township of Thesele in the early 1990s on the later career paths of the participants. Her five main research participants² were professionals in the creative industry in South Africa. Her study shows that in retrospect, the five performative art professionals held their experience in the Thesele Creative Society in a very high regard. They said it contributed to their successful careers in both artistic skills, such as acting, dancing and drumming, as well as in non-artistic skills, such as “self-confidence, the ability to deal with peer pressure, and an expanded knowledge of youth challenges of the time such as crime and HIV/AIDS” (Mzaku 2013, 82).

While the South African government’s White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage emphasises access to arts for every learner as a human right, the public schools lack

² The participants were: Miriam Vangile (“Sisi”) Maphalala, Mrs Tshepiso Ntsoko, Ms Tlalane Jeannette Moletsane, Mr Mandla Innocent “S’dala” Xosa, and Kenneth Mncedisi Nkosi (Mzaku 2013, 39-43).

behind in providing arts education. Community arts centres have played a pivotal role in providing spaces for artistic practices especially to South African blacks, and furthered many artistic careers (Lochner 2013; Mzaku 2013).

While the drama and arts and crafts projects of this study reside in a community centre, and thus not in a community *arts* centre, the analyses on the community arts centres are informative when looking at the two projects that are subjects of this study. “Community arts centres” in South Africa are a heterogeneous group of centres with differing histories and different levels of radicalism and pragmatism. However, common features among the centres have been providing access to creative activities for marginalised people, with an emphasis on the “social and therapeutic role of the arts” (Hagg 2002, 172). South African art centres have had two specific foci: alternative art education, and training professional artists. (Ibid.) Traditionally the community art centres have provided black artists with space, equipment and supportive environment for making art, as well as connections to gallery owners, collectors and tourists. Performance arts projects have been a “springboard to national festivals and competitions” (ibid. 173). All of these elements were in place in the community centre of this study. The fact that there are some non-artistic projects going on as well, is probably the reason the centre is not called “community arts centre”.

2.4 Theatre in development studies

Theatre has been addressed in development thinking and practice in many forms. By definition, the most obviously linked form of theatre related to development is “theatre for development”, often concerned about educating the masses about developmental issues through drama (see for example Gibbs 1999; Odhiambo 2014). Throughout history, some of the didactic theatre has practiced what Aure, Bjerkenstein and Songe-Møller call “static didactics”, which serves the politics concerned with retaining social norms and power. (Aure, Bjerkestrand, and Songe-Møller 2013.) Related to the field of development studies, Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed (Boal 2008(1974)) – named to honour Paolo Freire’s classic Pedagogy of

the Oppressed – could be identified as a classic text about the use of theatre for emancipatory development.

In their book *African Theatre in Development*, the editors Martin Banham, James Gibbs, and Femi Osofisan (Banham, Gibbs, and Osofisan 1999) have collected a series of texts that give an overview of the ways theatre has been “used” for development. More recently, a term “applied theatre” has emerged to group up a range of different types of theatrical practices, concerned with employing the process of theatre for the social and community change. The general concept of applied theatre can include forms of theatre such as community theatre, theatre for social change, popular theatre, drama in education, theatre for development, theatre for integrated rural development and so on. (Prentki and Preston 2009).

Tim Prentki and Sheila Preston suggest that the philosophy behind a theatre that aims at social change, is in Marx’s idea – brought to the field of theatre by Bertolt Brecht – that “philosophers have only interpreted the world, the point is to change it” (Prentki and Preston 2009, 12). The question then arises; how can the world be changed through theatre? According to Jonothan Neelands, the “defining, or unique, characteristic of drama as creative learning is that we imagine ourselves differently” (Neelands 2011, 170). When acting, a person is invited to participate in the construction of an imagined world, in which they also have an imagined role and personality, Neelands suggests. Particularly powerful tool for this is the act of role-playing: “through taking and participating in a role, young people are encouraged to look at the world from other perspectives and to consider new alternatives and interpretive choices” (ibid., 171). Through the process of role-playing, the youth may begin to imagine themselves differently and to “find the confidence and imaginative potential to change themselves and the world in actuality, not just in artistic zone” (ibid.).

In this research, I discuss the subtle practices involved in role-playing, and how they contribute, in the context of the drama group studied here, to the changed understandings of the self and the world. By the practices involved I refer to the multiplicity of ways of conducting research by the drama participants in order to

understand and enact a given character in the play, the social practices of team-support and collective brainstorming, and introspection to one's own behaviour, such as talking, and the conscious efforts to improve it. These practices contribute to the role-playing, when role-playing is understood as enacting a character in a collective whole composed of many characters, and involving all the work required to prepare the person to act the character well in the collective context.

2.5 Arts and Crafts in development studies

For without understanding in the fullest sense, what a craft object is, the craft field will remain unable to define the limits of its activities, especially vis-à-vis fine art and design, and hence it will be unable to articulate a serious role for itself in the contemporary world. In the face of the great prestige accorded fine art and design in our society, craft will eventually disappear as a recognizable field of activity, being absorbed by either fine art or design. The unfortunate consequence of this is that the unique approach to understanding the world that I believe the craft object can offer will be lost. (Risatti 2007, Preface)

Howard Risatti is one of the few scholars who attempts to create a theory about crafts (Alfoldy 2009). He makes a distinction between the term "craft", by which he refers to the physical object produced, and "craftsmanship", when he refers to the "skilled activities with which and through which these objects are made" (Risatti 2007, 14).

Knitting and crocheting have been widely studied in the context of mental health and physical capabilities. (see for example Riley, Corkhill, and Morris 2013; Duffy 2007). These studies have shown that knitting can be meditative, reduce the knitter's anxiety and concentration problems, and help them trust in the possibility of self-progress. In addition to the field of psychology, crafts have been studied in the field of craft research, which is exemplified in the Journal of Modern Craft. The journal compiles several studies that aim to explain and describe crafts. However, neither this journal provides a profound analysis on the relationship between making crafts and development. When talking about arts and crafts, it is hard to avoid coming across a

long prevailing debate on the relationship between arts and crafts, the debate about whether crafts can be defined as art, or is it “only” a method for making tools for everyday use (Risatti 2007; Becker 1978). Since the emergence of the new field of “design”, the question of arts and crafts has become even more ambiguous (Risatti 2007). However, this research does not delve into this debate on the definition and difference of arts and crafts.

3 Theoretical framework: Development as emancipation

The core questions of development studies focus on global inequalities; why do people have such different and unequal living standards and opportunities? What can, what is, and what has been done about this in different parts of the world? What are the reasons behind poverty and wealth, and behind global social and economic inequality? (Koponen 2016a.) While the questions have remained somewhat the same, the answers and actions taken have varied greatly during the last half a century of development thinking.

Development scholar Frans Schuurman describes the era between World War II and the mid-1980s in development thinking, as an era of three basic paradigms: 1) essentialising the Third World societies and its people as homogenous entities, 2) believing in the success of development interventions and in continuous progress, and 3) believing in the crucial role of nation states in bringing about that progress (Schuurman 2000, 7). However, these paradigms have – at least in theory, if not practice – come to an *impasse*, as world realities³ have not proven to follow the nation-state model, the “50 years of development” have not led to the outcomes that had been hoped for, and the essentialising perspective on the “Third World” people has neither proven to be truthful nor helpful. (Ibid.) From the 1945 to the 1960, the

³ In the wake of the 1990s the Newly Industrialised Economies shifted the world economic power relations, the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of “transition economies” in Europe and in Asia challenged the coherence of the concept of ‘Third World’ – the object of development theories – and the environmental damage caused by the modern capitalist economic system became more evident. All of this played a role in shifting the models of economic theory, in addition to the unrealistic paradigms described by Schuurman. (Schuurman 2000; Sumner and Tribe 2008.)

cornerstone of development was that of economic growth (see for instance Hagg 2002, 41).

After it was concluded that “economic growth is necessary but not sufficient condition for economic development” (ibid. 43), there was a move to “holistic development” thinking, which emphasised the importance of functioning institutions and health of the people. (Ibid.) The latest turn in development theory has brought questions of civil society and civic participation into focus (Wald 2015). Topics of education, environment, and women and girls have gained more space in development discussions since the 1990s. With the turn of the century, topics of citizenship, unemployment and global youth have slowly started to gain prominence.

A major challenger to the “development as growth” thinking has been the idea of development as freedom. Economist Amartya Sen, in his book *Development as Freedom*, suggests two reasons for freedom being a crucial element of development. The first one, “evaluative reason”, states that progress should be assessed primarily based on whether the freedoms that people have are enhanced or not. The second, the “effectiveness reason”, states that real development can be achieved only through free agency of people, that only free agents can change the world in a way that leads to development. Sen’s fundamental argument is that achieving freedom, *per se*, is development. (Sen 2001, 3).

Philosopher Martha Nussbaum has developed the idea of development as freedom both in collaboration with Sen, and on her own. Later in this chapter, in section 3.2, I discuss Nussbaum’s “capability approach” to development, which is one of the clearest formulations connecting the idea of freedom to development. In section 3.1, I discuss etymology of the concept of emancipation, and in section 3.3, I discuss the subject who experiences emancipation. Term “self-actualisation” is often brought up in connection to arts and emancipation. Self-actualisation, and a related term, self-realisation, are discussed in section 3.4. Section 3.5 directs the theoretical contemplations to the context of this study by discussing emancipation in connection to learning, and the constructivist approach to learning and critical pedagogy. Section 3.7 outlines the different parts of the theory chapter.

3.1 Emancipation

The concept of “emancipation” originates from Roman law, where it used to mean the liberation of a child from their father. In the end of 18th century the word emancipation was connected to the Enlightenment discussions of freedom, autonomy and public sphere, but it was not before Marx and other Left-Hegelians radicalised the term in the 1830s, that it became widely known and used. (Morrow 2006.) In the 19th and 20th centuries, *emancipation* was of interest both to liberalism and socialism. Liberalism viewed emancipation as a question of political rights, which could have been given to citizens from above. The socialist view however paid attention to the social and psychological pre-conditions to the autonomy of an individual. (Morrow 2006.)

Even though Karl Marx himself never defined emancipation, in his essay “On the Jewish Question” he analysed *political emancipation* and “*real*” *emancipation* (Marx 1844; Schmied-Kowarzik 1998; Wolff 2015). While political emancipation means that citizens are equal before the state regardless of religion, property, or other private characteristics of an individual, and thus their lives and identities are liberated from being determined by social position, political emancipation can also be un-freeing. According to Marx, political emancipation is un-freeing because it separates the private and the public sphere in a way that makes collective decision making disappear, and hence people are not able to make decisions about what kind of social lives they want to produce and what kind of persons to become. (Schmied-Kowarzik 1998.) Freedom in *political emancipation* is freedom from interference by the state. For Marx, “real freedom is to be found positively in our relations with other people, (...) in human community, not in isolation” (Wolff 2015). Insisting on “a regime of rights”, according to Marx, has the potential of making people see each other in a way that undermines “the possibility of the real freedom we may find in human emancipation” (ibid.).

Emancipation is used here instead of the verb *to free* someone, as it refers specifically to freeing someone from oppressive *social* relations. A fish released from a fishing net

is freed, but not emancipated. The concept of emancipation is also linked to multiple sources of modern and post-modern oppression: racism, classism, sexism, ableism, to name a few, as the term emancipation has been used at large in connection to these phenomena. Therefore, the term emancipation carries with it the notion of liberation from contemporary times' social oppression, and is thus a viable term to use regarding today's discussions of liberation struggle.

The concept of emancipation has been criticized by post-modernists because it derives from universalising Enlightenment thinking, while the post-modern approach to social theory emphasises difference and diversity (Schoorman 2000, 14). Still, Frans Schoorman argues, "human emancipation" should be the focus of development studies because, "inequality to access to power, to resources, to a human existence – in short, inequality of emancipation, [rather than diversity or difference]" is the core question of development studies (Schoorman 2000, 14). The problem of unequal access to power, resources, and "human existence" can be seen as caused by social oppression, which makes it a challenge that emancipation can solve or alleviate.

In 20th century social science, the concept of emancipation was discussed extensively by the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, which follows the Marxist tradition of having a practical purpose of human "emancipation from slavery" (Bohman 2001; Alvesson and Sködborg 2009). A theoretical approach that aims at emancipating people from domination by both material conditions – such as lives restricted by a lack of water or nutrition, war and conflict, or lack of shelter – and by psychological, cultural, and other constraints for living – such as racism and discrimination, fear of physical or psychological violence, or authoritarian education – is a convenient approach for the field of development studies.

This study focuses on emancipation, as understood as referring to emancipation from social, psychological, and institutional hindrances that prevent people from expressing themselves and making decisions based on in-depth understanding. This thesis works with the term emancipation on two separate, while intertwined levels. First, it is the philosophical, methodological, ethical and political starting point of this study, following the legacy of the Frankfurt School, according to which social inquiry "ought

to combine, rather than separate the poles of philosophy and the social sciences: explanation and understanding, structure and agency, regularity and normativity” in order to achieve its emancipatory purpose (Bohman 2015). Secondly, the research takes human emancipation as an end to “development”, and analyses the creative projects in the light of human emancipation.

3.2 Emancipation and human capabilities

As mentioned in the beginning of chapter three, in the post- WWII era, one could say that a major dichotomy in development thinking and practice has been between measuring development through economic growth and seeing development as a more holistic phenomenon. A common tool used for measuring development as economic growth has been calculating (and comparing) the gross domestic products (GDP) of nations. This was especially the case before Human Development Index (HDI⁴), was introduced with the World Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1990. The HDI was inspired by capabilities thinking, which Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum had both, first separately and later together developed. In the Human Development Paradigm, Sen and Nussbaum focused attention on what human beings can do, instead of on what they possess. This was not a new idea per se, but something Aristotle had already paid attention to (Nussbaum 2000). By moving the discussion towards what people are capable of doing, towards ‘capabilities’, Sen and Nussbaum were able to separate means – like money – from ends – like well-being or freedom – in a meaningful way. (Stanton 2007, 9). In the HDI, development is still quantified through measures like “life expectancy”, “literacy rate”, or “school enrolment”. The HDI assumes that when basic necessities are provided, people have the freedom and ability to truly influence their own lives.

Martha Nussbaum has furthered the capabilities approach to emphasize the importance of each individual, and the importance of each capability as an end to development. Equally, it is important to look at the individuals – one cannot assess

⁴ The HDI is based on the notion that given certain basic needs, people can influence their own lives. Without such necessities, people are not able to develop their potential, because they are deprived of the necessary means to pursue higher goals. The approach thus differs from the line of thought that the standard of living could be defined from outside by assessing the material well-being. (Stanton 2007).

development of a society by looking at averages. (Nussbaum 2000, 2011.)

The idea of “really human” life – which according to the capabilities approach is the goal of development – implies that all the human beings in the world have some essential similarities in “fulfilling their humanity”. The core claim of capability approach is that people should be able to “lead the lives they have reason to value” (Robeyns 2006, 351). Such universal notions of the human condition and peoples’ needs have been criticized, especially by feminist theorists. The capabilities approach has also been criticised for its individualistic stance on freedom. Hartley Dean suggests that the “priority (in capabilities approach) is individual liberty, not social solidarity; the freedom to choose, not the need to belong” (Dean 2009, 5).

Nussbaum defends the capabilities approach against the critique of universalism, saying that even though the approach is strongly universalistic, it is sensitive to local particularity, and to the many ways in which circumstances shape not only options but also beliefs and preferences. (Nussbaum 2000, 7.) She argues that there are some central human capabilities that regardless of time and place contribute, and are necessary, to an individual’s good life, and therefore these functions can be used when thinking about life worthy of “human dignity” across time and space. Nussbaum has compiled a list of ten central capabilities, which connect the goal of development as having effective means to influence one’s life, to different sectors of life (such as bodily health and social relations) that are crucial for reaching this goal.

Central Human Capabilities according to Martha Nussbaum

1. Life. Being able to live to the end of a human life of normal length; not dying prematurely, or before one’s life is so reduced as to be not worth living.
2. Bodily Health. Being able to have good health, including reproductive health; to be adequately nourished; to have adequate shelter.
3. Bodily Integrity. Being able to move freely from place to place; having one’s bodily boundaries treated as sovereign, i.e. being able to be secure against assault, including sexual assault, child sexual abuse, and domestic violence; having opportunities for sexual satisfaction and for choice in matters of reproduction.
4. Senses, Imagination, and Thought. Being able to use the senses, to imagine, think, and reason – and to do these things in a “truly human” way, a way informed and cultivated by an adequate

education, including, but by no means limited to, literacy and basic mathematical and scientific training[AEI1] . [...]

5. Emotions. Being able to have attachments to things and people outside ourselves; to love those who love and care for us, to grieve at their absence; in general, to love, to grieve, to experience longing, gratitude, and justified anger[AEI2] . [...]

6. Practical Reason. Being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life. [...]

7. Affiliation.

A. Being able to live with and toward others, to recognize and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction; to be able to imagine the situation of another and to have compassion for that situation; to have the capability for both justice and friendship[AEI3] . [...]

B. Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin. [...]

8. Other Species. Being able to live with concern for and in relation to animals, plants, and the world of nature.

9. Play. Being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities.

10. Control over One's Environment.

A. Political. Being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life; having the right of political participation, protections of free speech and association.

B. Material. Being able to hold property (both land and movable goods), not just formally but in terms of real opportunity; and having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure. (Nussbaum 2000, 78-80)

In Nussbaum's words, capabilities "are the answers to the question, 'What is this person able to do and to be?' (Nussbaum 2011, 20).⁵ Capability is a freedom which is created by a combination of personal, internal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment in which the choice and (in)action takes place (ibid.). Internal capabilities can be trained or developed, "in most cases, in interaction with the social, economic, familial, and political environment" (ibid., 21). Internal capabilities can range from sewing skills, to self-esteem, or skills developed to form and maintain

⁵ Amartya Sen calls them "'substantial freedoms,' a set of (usually interrelated) opportunities to choose and to act" (Nussbaum 2011,20).

friendships. It is possible to speak of capabilities only when both internal capabilities and external conditions are in place to support a certain functioning in a specific context. For example, if one has the internal capabilities to form a friendship, but is deprived of human interaction with potential friends, one is not able to function as a friend. Nussbaum states that “One job of a society that wants to promote the most important human capabilities is to support the development of internal capabilities – through education, resources to enhance physical and emotional health, support for family care and love, a system of education, and much more” (Nussbaum 2011, 21).

The concept of capabilities includes enhancement of individual agency through development of individual abilities, but also through changing of the world so that it would support, not hinder, individuals to live “really humanly”. Capabilities approach is connected to the idea of emancipation as a process of liberation from psychological and social hindrances to life. Enhancement of internal capabilities supports psychological liberation, while changing the world to enhance capabilities, supports liberation from social hindrances.

Not least because of its utopian nature which positions the individual in a society free of oppressive power structures, the capabilities approach has received heavy criticism. Hartley Dean states:

In the space of capabilities the individual is one step removed; she is objectively distanced from the relations of power within which her identity and her life chances must be constituted. Within the space of capabilities there are three major issues which the individual cannot readily see and which are seldomly discussed. First and in any event, human beings cannot be free from their dependency upon other human beings. Second and third, under capitalist social relations of production, individuals can be free neither from hegemonic controls over their participation in the public realm, nor from the direct or indirect consequences of the exploitation of human labour. (Dean 2009, 5)

The capabilities approach says that if the central capabilities materialized – which according to Nussbaum would be the responsibility of the state to take care of at least up until a minimum threshold of the capabilities (Nussbaum 2011) – there would *not be exploitation* of any kind. People would be able to participate fully in the public realm, and people would not be dependent on other people in non-healthy ways. Nussbaum turns the gaze towards all the areas of life that must be considered for this kind of utopia to actualize, but overlooks the realities of unequal power relations in contemporary, global world. The approach also does not mention non-state actors as possible entities for battling global inequality.

Another criticism has been that, even though the capabilities approach is a practical approach for a philosopher, it is still very impractical approach to be employed in development politics (Robeyns 2006). Despite the criticism, the capabilities approach provides a holistic, normative framework for what *should be* and how people should *feel* in an ideal world. It could be fruitful to discuss the idea that individual freedom would always be worthier than exchanging some freedom for a sense of belonging to a community – a critique put forth by Dean (2009) – in case these are mutually exclusive. If individual freedom and belonging to a community are mutually exclusive, the utopia of the capabilities approach might not be reachable. This possible conflict can be understood further in the next section, which discusses the individual, society, and emancipation.

3.3 Individual or social emancipation?

Humans are social beings, and emancipated individual should be able to live in a community of other human beings. This means that ideally, all the members of a community would be committed to the idea of emancipation of its individuals, and thus regulate their own actions to not hinder, but to encourage emancipation of other members of the community. The social structures should support the endeavours of individual and collective emancipation. In a community, there are matters that affect everyone that cannot be decided upon by few individuals without risking hindering the endeavours of emancipation of those who did not take part in the decision-making.

Decision-making structures, the politics, should consider the goal of supporting emancipation endeavours of the members of the community. In an increasingly globalized world, with deeply intertwined connections between different parts of the world, the global impact of even the smallest local decisions should be considered. Roy Bhaskar, the founder of “critical realism”, emphasised the need to search for others’ freedom while searching for one’s own freedom. The idea presented in the following paragraph provides one solution to the question of how to live in a community as an individual who seeks emancipation.

The question of an individual having as much power over their life circumstances as possible – if they do not misuse the powers for the disadvantage of others – is a question of personal autonomy. That is a normative stance that holds that individuals should live lives of their own choosing. This idea as a norm for good life has been put forward, amongst others, by Amartya Sen. (Sen 2001.)

It is important to ask who the subject of emancipation is: is it an individual, or is it a community? What is an individual, and what does it mean to speak about individual emancipation? Karl Marx suggested that real freedom lies in enabling relations with other people, not in having the freedom to not face interference from others. Thus, if “individual freedom” is dependent on social relations, so is individual emancipation. Philosopher Roy Bhaskar has suggested that the freedom people can find lies in the realisation that an individual is one with the social and material world around us:

[...] in a real sense, a sense which is very difficult for most people to comprehend, you are not really different from me, but you actually are me. Sure, you are different as an embodied personality from me, but you are also enfolded within me, you are part of me and I am part of you and therefore your pain is as much my pain. When I fully understand this, raise my sensitivity to a level that I can feel it as my pain then your unfreedom is as much a curse, a blight on me as my unfreedom. Then I cannot stop struggling until everyone is free. This is the ideal. The freer I become the more my action will move in the right direction. (Bhaskar in Scott and Bhaskar 2015, 57–58.)

Bhaskar’s claim that “the freer I become the more my action will move in the right

direction” resonates with Amartya Sen’s “effectiveness reason” for why freedom is crucial element of development. Bhaskar connects the attempt to free oneself to necessary attempts to free others, which is an idea many philosophers, religious leaders and spiritual guides from Jesus Christ to Buddha to Karl Marx, have presented before Bhaskar (Bhaskar in Scott and Bhaskar 2015, 48). Thus, a person attempting to achieve greater freedom for themselves, “must be engaged in activities of practical transformation of the world”, to “[put oneself] in the cause of human emancipation, in fact universal self-realisation”. (Bhaskar in Scott and Bhaskar 2015, 47–48.) Bhaskar connects the attempt of freedom to self-improvement and learning “in the broad sense and commitment to transformation of social structures and the emancipation of all” (ibid.)

For Bhaskar and Critical Realism, there is no “agency-structure problem”. Human agents are seen being “bio-psycho-social structures with emergent powers of intentionality”, while social structures are also seen to have agency. The agency of social structures transcends and influences the individual agents, which co-constitute these social structures. (Gorski 2013, 668–669.) “The important problems” in critical realism, suggests Philip Gorski, “are ‘structure/structure’ or ‘agent/ agent’ ones” (ibid.). I adopt the approach of Roy Bhaskar about the merging of individual and society. When I study emancipation, I look at the different embodied personalities and I interview them, and I believe they have different subjective experiences based on their different “bio-psycho-social” backgrounds. But, I do not try to reduce their emancipation either to that of an individual, or to the emancipation of a social group.

If the aim of an individual or community’s functioning is that no decision or action hinders the emancipation of other people or groups, learning about these others and understanding their perspective is a precondition of such politics. Understanding other’s perspective is, in scientific context, called empathy, and taking supportive action according to that understanding, is called sympathy (Nilsson 2003).

3.4 On self-actualization and self-realization

Self-actualization is a term often connected to discourse on creativity, freedom, emancipation and empowerment. Clinical psychologist Abraham Maslow was one of the first ones to formulate a “theory of self-actualisation”. According to Maslow, self-actualised persons had the ability to “transcend levels of physiological, psychological and social needs, to obtain fulfilment of personal needs in terms of life’s meaning” (Reitan 2013). The theory, which has been widely used, and widely criticized (Kaur 2013), is perhaps one of the reasons the growth paradigm has been so prominent in development thinking: Maslow claimed that people’s needs are hierarchical, and only after the more elementary, material needs are fulfilled, can a person fulfil the “higher level” needs (Maslow 2000). The most elementary needs, according to Maslow, are physiological needs such as food and sleep. On the next levels of Maslow’s pyramid illustration, are in hierarchic order “safety needs”, “love needs” including a need for belonging and affection, and “the esteem needs”. The narrow top of the pyramid, the fifth ladder, represents the “need for self-actualisation”, the need for creative self-development (Maslow 2000).

Maslow’s theory of self-actualization, even though useful in describing different needs, has been criticized for organizing them in a linear hierarchy, and for the “myth” that “self-actualization” is possible and desirable a goal for all the people (Dean 2009). van Graan suggests (in Lochner 2010) that seeing people as not having needs to express aesthetic and creative values is dehumanizing. Also, Martha Nussbaum refuses to arrange the capabilities she presents in a hierarchical order. The qualities of the ten central capabilities extend to all levels of Maslow’s pyramid, and hence the statement that they are all equally important, is also a criticism of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It is quite clear that the need for nutrition is more important than self-actualisation for a person to stay alive. But the problem with Maslow’s self-actualisation theory is, how much of the most elementary needs must be satisfied for the needs of “higher levels” to start playing a role for a human well-being? How much love and belonging must one experience in order to be able to aspire for self-actualisation?

The understanding of self-actualisation as a person's pursuit to find answers to "big questions", such as, what the meaning of life is, or what is right and what is wrong, is still a frequently used concept. The difference between self-realization and self-actualization is that self-realization refers to the "conception of the good life as one of active self-realization, rather than passive consumption", which is at the centre of Marxist thinking (Elster 1986, abstract). Self-actualization as a term is not directly related to the criticism of capitalistic consumption, but rather comes from humanistic psychology's tradition of looking at the individual's endeavours to live a fulfilling life.

Self-determination is one of the terms connected to self-actualization and self-realization. Karrie Shogren, William Kennedy, Chantelle Dowsett and Todd D. Little (Shogren et al. 2014) write that self-determination is represented by the ability to make choices, decisions and set goals. Freire writes that oppressed people cannot make their own choices, because the oppressor has always made the important choices on their behalf. Therefore, the ability to make choices and set individual or social goals, indicates freedom to act according to one's own will, not just following the will of others

Christopher Niemiec and Richard Ryan write about the self-determination theory, which "assumes that inherent in human nature is the propensity to be curious about one's environment and interested in learning and developing one's knowledge" (Niemiec and Ryan 2009). According to the theory, there is a "human nature", for which it is innate to be curious about one's social and physical surroundings, and to desire to understand those. Niemiec and Ryan continue, that often external "controls, close supervision and monitoring, and evaluations" together with reward-punishment systems introduced by educators, diminish the learners' feeling of joy, enthusiasm and interest in learning, replacing those with "experiences of anxiety, boredom, or alienation" (ibid. 134). This suggests that learning is an inseparable endeavour from what it is to be human.

3.5 Learning and emancipation

3.5.1 Critical Pedagogy and emancipation

Learning and education have often been connected to wider political and ideological struggles. Entities who organise education are the ones with the power to decide on the content of a curriculum. Historically, these entities have been the church, the state, parents and other elders, respected people, like gurus, or older relatives. Since the 19th century, states, especially in the Global North, have increasingly taken responsibility (and entitlement) to organise education of their inhabitants (Vesikansa 2009). Apart from states, local and development NGOs, as well as religious associations, have played a significant role in organising education, especially in the so called Global South. These NGOs are often supported by international Development Organizations, such as USAID or the EU (Nordtveit 2010; Moutsios 2010).

It is almost impossible to talk about emancipatory learning, without looking at the writings of the “father of critical pedagogy”, Paulo Freire. Paulo Freire vocalized some of the ground-breaking ideas of education and learning, social development, and equality, that are relevant to this day. Freire wrote *the Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the context of 1960s Brazil, which was a country divided by race and class into a small and powerful elite, the “colonizers”, and a big group of often illiterate peasants, the “colonized”. According to Freire, the colonizers, also called the oppressors, had an interest in maintaining the political and economic *status quo*, which was beneficial to them. (Freire 1996) It is interesting that the book was distributed underground by various revolutionary groups in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, while it was banned by the apartheid regime (Macedo in Freire 2000; von Holdt 2011; Hagg 2002; Walters 1985).

The book consists of four parts. The first one introduces oppression as a dehumanizing practice. In the second part, he examines the “banking concept of education”, where students are considered empty “containers” to be filled with information poured by the teacher. (Freire 1996, 52-53.) Freire claims this approach to education is dehumanizing, because it denies students’ capability and need to think on their own

accord. Interestingly, he states that this approach not only dehumanizes the students, but also the teachers, because it denies the teachers the possibility of being incomplete and vulnerable, instead expecting them to be all-knowing. The third chapter discusses dialogue as the practice of freedom. Freire describes the conditions required for a true dialogue. Dialogue is a mutual “naming of the world” by two or more parties, each party being humble to their own incompleteness and imperfections. “At the point of encounter, [...] there are only people who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know” (Freire 1996, 71). In the last chapter, Freire describes “a theory of anti-dialogical action”, in which he describes some means the oppressive elite use to preserve the oppressive state of affairs in the society.

The four concepts from the Pedagogy of the Oppressed that will be elaborated on, in order to provide tools for analysing learning and the projects from the point of view of emancipation are *(de)humanization*, *conscientization*, *praxis* and *dialogue*. I think these concepts provide tangible tools to recognize oppressive social relations. I will introduce them next, and come back to them in the analysis of the projects.

The concept of *humanization* requires us to ask what it means to be human. Becoming more of an independent thinker, living better in a community, being able to act towards individual and social goals, developing one’s understanding of the self and the others and the world, transforming the world for better, are all aspects of becoming more human. The absence of these abilities, is hence, dehumanizing.

Dehumanization is an act of hindering another person’s “pursuit of self-affirmation”, an act of failing to “recognize others as persons” (Freire 1997, 37). Humanization then, is the opposite of dehumanization: supporting a pursuit of self-affirmation, and seeing the other (and the self) as a person. Humanization according to Freire, includes “emancipation of labour” and “overcoming of alienation”. It is connected to history, but it is not historically determined. (Freire 1996, 26.) Humanization is becoming more and more capable of thinking on one’s own accord, and being allowed to be vulnerable. Freire argues that an oppressed person, who is not conscious of their oppression, will likely become an oppressor themselves, if they get power to change

their life situation. This is because the people the oppressed have seen as being respected – a feeling most people long for, to be respected by others – are the oppressors. Thus, in the endeavours to become more human, to be respected, the oppressed have the oppressors as epitomes of humans. To cut the chain of oppression, to take the first step of real humanization, the oppressed must have “consciousness of themselves as persons or as members of an oppressed class” (ibid.) This becoming conscious is called *conscientization* (Freire 1996).

To become more fully human, to become more and more humanized, and to become freer, people must balance theory and practice, to live in *praxis*. Praxis is a term Freire uses to describe an intersection, or an intertwined combination, of critical reflection and action, in order to change a state of being. Conscientization is an element of the critical reflection. Without critical reflection, action becomes un-critical activism, and without action, critical reflection will not bear a fruit. In order to change the world, continuous praxis is required. (Freire 2000) An essential tool for critical reflection is dialogue. (Freire 2000) Through an encounter with another person, through an honest discourse, exchange of ideas and emotions, an understanding of the other person, and of oneself, can take place.

I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing. (Freire 2000, 17)

Dialogue as an integral part of learning and being a human is of course not only Freire’s idea. The role of communication in affecting learning hence becomes crucial to understand.

3.5.2 Learning as Communication

The revolutionary potential of democracy lies in democracy as a way of life, as a chance for all to be seen and heard, represented and respected, rather than a silencing of bodies and minds. (Monchinski 2011)

Yet only through communication can human life hold meaning. (Freire 2000, 77)

John Dewey (1916) claimed that “real social life” requires communication. According to him, people form a community, neither because they are in close physical proximity to each other, nor because they work for the same goal (as parts of a machine can also do that), but because – or if – they communicate about that goal and adjust their behaviour according to that goal. Hence, society does not only continue to exist by communication, but it exists *in* communication. (Dewey 1916). Dewey continues, that a crucial characteristic of communication is that it is, by nature, educative. The mechanism by which communication is educative is the following: on the one hand, being a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience, and on the other hand, communicating one’s own experience to another person also leads to a changed and enlarged understanding of the experience, because the experience must be formulated in order to be communicated. When formulating a message to another person, one has to “consider[] what points of contact it has with the life of another so that it may be got into such form that he can appreciate its meaning” (Dewey 1916, 5-6).

Speaking out loud and addressing another person, while exposing one’s thoughts, makes one vulnerable. This vulnerability makes one introspect what one is saying, because one knows that the recipient of the comment, will inspect it. Hence, real communication requires placing oneself in a vulnerable position. I would assume, that spaces and people, who feel safe for another person, encourage real communication more than spaces or people who feel hostile. Therefore, to analyse communication and social relations in certain context, one can look at how safe the people in the context feel about expressing their thoughts and feelings. Also, being a recipient of real communication helps the recipient to understand the other person. Becoming aware of the experience of the other is a prerequisite for feeling empathy. Peter Nilsson distinguishes between empathy and sympathy as scientific concepts: “in general, sympathy is described as a state of awareness of and concern for the condition of another, whereas empathy is described as a state of awareness of, but not necessarily concern for, another person’s condition” (Wispé 1987 in Nilsson 2003, 1).

In Freire's terms, for conscientization, empathy is needed, and for praxis, sympathy is needed.

Martha Nussbaum also connects empathy to learning, and to democracy. For democracy, people need to have education which trains them for critical thinking and argumentation, and which allows and encourages them to question their personal preferences and traditions of their home communities. Another requirement for education for democracy, according to Nussbaum, is developing empathy. Interestingly, Nussbaum emphasises the role of play and arts – especially belles-lettres – for developing empathy (Rinkinen 2015, 2), while Freire emphasises dialogue.

3.6 Emancipation in spaces

The previous sections have presented the idea of emancipation in connection to the capabilities approach, self-actualization and learning. Sara Ahmed's analysis of "orientation to objects" provides another analytical tool for recognizing dehumanizing spaces and acts in real life. Let us bear in mind that, according to Freire, "dehumanization is an act of hindering another person's "pursuit of self-affirmation", an act of failing to "recognize others as persons" (Freire 1997, 37).

Sara Ahmed connects the way human bodies are *oriented* to objects, to the feeling of being "in" or "out of" place in a particular context. (Ahmed 2007, 2006.) She uses Edmund Husserl's example of a writing table to demonstrate the way different people can be oriented to an object (table, in this case an "object of writing"), in different ways. When Husserl, a male philosopher, orients towards a writing table, the table for him manifests writing, work that is accessible to Husserl. Ahmed then quotes philosopher Adrienne Rich, to demonstrate a different orientation to objects of writing. When Rich tried to orient towards the writing table, her child "would come to pull at my hand, ask for help, punch at the typewriter keys" (Rich, quoted in Ahmed 2006, 547).

The difference between how different people orient towards same objects can be thought to be accidental – had Adrienne Rich not had children, her orientation could

have been more like Husserl's. Only that Husserl also had children⁶. Why, then, was his story not like Rich's? Husserl and Rich were oriented towards the table in different ways, even though both had children. Table as a means for writing was "given" to Husserl, because of his male gender identity. In the gendered social structure he was living in, there was usually a woman – the mother of the children – who took care of the children so that he could work. The surrounding system enabled him to orient towards the table in the way he did. His orientation towards the table was *enabling*. The surrounding society supported his *capability* to write, while the same society discouraged that of Rich's. Rich was not able to view the table as a writing table, because of the social hindrance (the needy child) the gendered social structure she was living in imposed on her act of writing. There was no one to enable her writing work, as she was the woman who was assigned – by her gender – the role of taking care of children.

Objects toward which people are oriented, do not only have to be material, such as a writing table, but can also be "styles", "capacities", "aspirations" and other matters "to do 'things' with" (Ahmed 2007, 157). In the context of emancipation theory, orientation to objects can be influenced by both psychological and social hindrances, and support. In *Phenomenology of Whiteness*, Ahmed provides an eloquent analysis on how race is one factor influencing the way of orientations, because it affects how others perceive us, and what others expect from our behaviour. Race also affects how we perceive ourselves, and what kind of behaviour we find "natural" to ourselves. Hence, not only do other people react to us orienting to objects, but also our orientation is shaped by how others react to our orientation.

Through skin colour, we "inherit the reachability of some objects" (Ahmed 2007, 154). By the "reachability", Ahmed refers to an idea that if we have "inherited the reachability" of something, when we try to reach that something, those witnessing our attempt to reach the thing will not even notice our endeavour, or at least, will not try to stop us. But if we have not inherited that, the reaction from others is different. Ahmed uses the term "hailing" from Althusser, to describe the practice of stopping or

⁶ See http://www.husserlpage.com/hus_bio.html (accessed 3 April 2017).

hindering a person from doing something that is allowed for others with different attributes (such as gender or race). A recent example of Finnish high school counsellors who direct immigrant youngsters to lower skill, lower paying jobs than what they would themselves aim at, publicised in the Finnish media, provides a real-life example of how something is not reachable for someone only because of their background. (YLE 2013; Rantala 2017). Not only do other people react to us orienting to objects, but also our orientation is shaped by how others react to our orientation. Constantly being hailed – or not hailed – when orienting to something, influences the way we orient to that.

The *hailing* is a powerful technique of abashing and discrediting a person, as it operates with the powerful emotion of shame. A continuous hailing can lead to a negative self-image, which prevents people from daring to try things out. Hiding a negative emotion, for its part, is extremely harmful for one's both physical and mental health. (On the discussion about the impact of shame on an individual, see Pennebaker, Zech, and Rimé 2001; Pennebaker 1997, *inter alia*.)

Since we are not made of only one attribute, a category such as class, but of many intersecting ones, how we inhabit a given category depends on how we inhabit others (Ahmed 2007, 159; Lorde 1984, 114-123). This is why some black bodies are *whiter* than others in white spaces, and also, why some white bodies are *whiter* than other white bodies.

Ahmed (2007, 2006) speaks about how gender and race affect how individuals orient to objects in space. Orientation captures the importance of space (both social and material) for the sense of being "free". Ahmed's idea of "phenomenology of being stopped" (Ahmed 2007, 161) is dehumanizing practice. As Ahmed says, when a person has inherited a reachability of an object, they do not necessarily even notice that it is reachable to them, because that reaching is so natural, it does not occur to them that they could not do that thing. But when something is not reachable to a person because of social or psychological hindrances, when trying to orient to that object, one feels the stopping. The most tangible example of this stopping is being hailed publicly, for

example shouted at a black person because of walking on a side of the street that was appointed to “whites only” during apartheid, could be an example.

As hailing is a dehumanizing act, emancipation is possible only in spaces free from hailing. In the example of the Finnish study councillors, the space (not in literal meaning) assigned the pupils different future prospects based on immigrant status (where race and prejudices about the cultural-economic class of the immigrant intersect). In the second example the space literally allocated one side of a street to a person, based on their skin colour. Emancipatory spaces do not differentiate between what different people can do based on artificial categories, such as race or gender.

3.7 Theoretical outline

The theoretical framework presented in this chapter suggests that emancipation, learning, empathy and sympathy, dialogue, and art have an intertwined relationship. An interesting question is the subject of emancipation or subject of learning; the individual-social dichotomy, which we have concluded is not a particularly interesting one, but instead, that interesting and important things happen in human interaction. We have taken Martha Nussbaum’s capabilities approach as a normative framework for how development as emancipation should appear, while being sceptical of its individualistic stance. We have four concepts; humanization, conscientisation, praxis, and dialogue, as our tools to grasp emancipatory action. We have the terms self-actualization, self-realization, and self-determination, which can be used to look at emancipatory action from an individual’s perspective, from the perspective of an individual humanization. Finally, through Sara Ahmed’s conceptualisation of “orienting toward objects”, we have tools to recognize dehumanizing practices in the context of hindering or preventing someone from aspiring for “objects” on basis of artificial categories, such as race or gender. We will come back to these concepts and theoretical approaches in chapter 5. Before that, let us turn our gaze to more tangible aspects of the study. In the next chapter, I introduce the community centre and the ACP and drama projects, as well as my path to study these. I also discuss the theoretical and practical questions of methodology.

4 Methodology

I conducted the empirical part of this study between 15th of October and 18th of December 2014. Choosing one's research topic is necessarily a political and value-laden act. We research what we think is worth researching, and our choices are guided by the pre-existing understanding we have of the world and its phenomena. When choosing the topic of research, one must not only consider why the topic is worth studying, but also to whom one writes for, how the results of the study can be used by others once published, and what kind of understandings of the world one's writing contributes to. This means that the *how* of the research is inseparable from the *what* and of the *why* of the research, both in terms of the style of data production, and the style of writing. This is important as social sciences have been criticised for contributing tools for controlling people, like in the "colonial project of anthropology" (see for example Said 1995), or in the case of youth research, providing the state with means for better control over the young people (Puuronen 2006). Thus, when thinking about the topic, the researcher has to think about the ways the study can be used for other means than what the intentions of the researcher were, in addition to the obviously needed scrutiny of their own intentions.

Professor of gender studies, Marianne Liljeström asks, how the information we are given can be assessed, if we do not know how it has been produced. How do the methods chosen influence the production of knowledge, and how do methodological choices enable the production of abstract and conceptual knowledge? (Liljeström 2004.) Feminist methodologies provide tools could help to understand the complexity of researcher-research participant relations. According to Marianne Liljeström and Shulamith Reinharz, even though feminist methodologies include a variety of epistemological and ontological approaches, the common understanding within recent feminist theory is that knowledge and knowing are tied to time, place, and persons, and that they are rooted in the perspective the researcher has on theory of knowledge (Liljeström 2004, Reinharz, 1992). I understand, like Shulamit Reinharz, C. Wright Mills and Mary Daly, that reporting about methods is not reporting about "the codification[s] of procedures", but rather providing "information about actual ways of

working” (C. Wright Mills 1959, quoted in Reinharz 1992, p. 5; Reinharz 1992, p. 5). In this chapter, I introduce the hermeneutic approach as an overall methodology for the study, as well as the choices in writing, interview methods and ethics, and special considerations in researching young people.

4.1 The Community Centre: A lively compound within the city

4.1.1 Navigating the Research Setting

About one in three master students in development studies from my university travels to the so called Global South to conduct field work, and another one third conducts fieldwork in Europe. In my research proposal when applying for a travel grant, I suggested I would conduct an ethnographic study on how young unemployed people navigate their livelihoods in a situation where there is no chance that every youngster gets a paid job. South Africa, and Johannesburg, became the location for the proposal for partly pragmatic reasons, but also because youth unemployment was often brought up in international media when turning the gaze towards South Africa.

After an unsuccessful attempt to find interviewees in Johannesburg while I was still in Helsinki, I thought it would be easier to contact them once I was there. When I arrived in Johannesburg, I met many young artists in several occasions. But when I presented my research idea to them, they were all very keen to refer me to *other* artists they knew. Perhaps they did not think they themselves belonged to my group of interest, or they did not want to participate in the research. After having been in Johannesburg for two weeks, I had agreed on one conversational interview with one young artist⁷. Before that meeting took place, I also set up a meeting with a head of an arts and crafts project, here called Lisa, in a local community centre. The meeting was

⁷ Days passed and I had not heard from the artist I had agreed to talk with, while my relationship with the (community centre?) project started to become more established. After a couple of weeks, I met the artist by accident, and told her the direction my work was going. She seemed to be relieved that she was not the focus anymore.

suggested by an acquaintance I met during the early part of my stay in Johannesburg. The meeting turned out to be very fruitful: after I told Lisa about my interests and my ethical and epistemological stances regarding the research, she invited me to come see the project and even gave me permission to ask the project participants to participate in the study. The indirect path of how the topic of this research started as a study of youth unemployment, morphed into a study of young artists in relation to the labour markets, and culminated into a study of arts projects in a community centre in the inner city of Johannesburg is typical to qualitative field research, such as ethnography, as described by Cerwonka and Malkki (2007).

4.1.2 The Community Centre

The research site, a community centre in the inner city of Johannesburg, is located in an old urban compound surrounded by a high but lightly built fence. Stairways, paths and tunnels connect the buildings to each other, leaving a small plot of grass, a wooden bench, a parking lot for a handful of cars, and some blossoming trees in the middle. Two gates lead to the compound, both guarded only by the employees of the centre. One of the buildings is used by the arts and crafts project (ACP from now on). In another is a central office, and the third is the community theatre. The other projects of the foundation, such as dance and music projects, are accommodated in a separate building. The compound is lively with dozens, if not hundreds of people passing by every day. The compound is connected to the surrounding city seamlessly; some of the buildings used by the centre also serve as flats for the residents of the city.

The people wandering around the community centre are participants of its several projects – in addition to the theatre and the ACP, the centre offers several other kinds of after-school projects. In addition to project participants, when walking around the compound, one comes across regular staff members and volunteers, who comprise about thirty people, as well as visitors from other NGOs. One of the core principles of the centre is openness and inclusiveness, which can be seen in the number of people the compound serves daily.

4.1.3 The Arts and Crafts Project

The aim of the ACP, according to their website and an interview with Lisa, is to provide safe space for the participants to learn key life skills to address the challenges in their daily lives. In addition to the social aim, the project aims to support the participants' economic independence through product sales.

The ACP resides in a separate building. One has to take a narrow set of stairs up in order to get into the crafters territory. Upstairs, there is a little kitchen where the crafters cook and make tea, and the main room where the crafters sit around a big table. The sides of the room are filled with craft materials and colourful craft works from current and earlier crafters: cushion covers, wall hangings, drawings, sketches, article clippings, and balls of wool. Next to the big room where the crafters work, there is an office – also filled with piles of craft work – where Lisa, senior crafters and facilitators of the project spend time. In the ACP, there are two groups, one that meets over the weekdays, and another that meets during the weekend.

The ACP was founded in the beginning of the millennium when the community centre was established as a foundation, changing the organisational structure from a Christian missionary based organisation run from Europe to a non-profit organisation aiming at creative community development in the inner city of Johannesburg. The director of the project is Lisa, an artist and activist, who began the project more than ten years ago. The other staff members of the project are three senior “crafters”, who have also been with the project since its beginning, and a “facilitator”, a 28-year-old woman who initially participated in the project, and was then asked to facilitate with teaching the other participants. Some of the senior crafters participated in the project as participants in the beginning as well.

The ACP has a few clients; some are resellers serving organic markets and other small scale businesses, or private persons, while some customers are cooperative banks, who for instance order holiday gifts for their employees or customers from the project. Establishing and maintaining the clients has been hard work, and has fallen mainly on Lisa's shoulders. The project participants can choose whether they participate in

working for a client's order or not. This serves the goal of not causing too much stress to the participants: "That is the difficult part, being creative versus the income generating part", Lisa says. Sometimes the project has lost a customer, due to difficulties with delivering the order in time, or maintaining contact with the customer. Not only the participants, who have different skills and determination for the crafts, but also the staff members have had conflicting interests regarding the aims of the project. Some of them preferred the focus of the project to being income generation, while others, for instance Lisa, emphasised the aim of providing a socially supportive, safe space to learn creative and practical skills from a long-term perspective.

During the time I conducted the interviews, the Monday to Friday group consisted of six crafters, from 19 to 28 years of age, four of them women, and two men. In the Saturday group, there were about fifteen participants, who were, on average, older than the weekday participants. Some of them worked elsewhere during the weekdays. My initial idea was to interview both groups, but from their polite way of saying "we are busy" I understood that the group was not eager to participate in the study. I introduced myself and the research to them one Saturday, and left my contact information saying that I would come visit them again in a week's time. In case someone wanted to participate in the research, we could agree on the interview times then. When I later asked one of the participants, who had seen my encounter with the Saturday group, about my gut feeling that they were reluctant to participate in the research, she looked uneasy, sat down and said:

These women, they don't trust anyone anymore. They think that, you come here and talk with them, and then you go back to your country, but how are you gonna help them? They think... how should I say it. They think you are gaining from them, but you are not going to help them.

We discussed the matter a little further with her. I said that it is a real concern, that researchers advance their careers with the help of the people who have so generously given their time and thoughts, while the participants do not necessarily gain from the research. Indeed, the women were commenting on the skewed power relations of science globally.

In the end, I interviewed four crafters, two women and two men from the Monday to Friday group. These participants are referred to in this research with the pseudonyms Tsholofelo, Lerato, Themba, and Siboniso. In addition, I interviewed Smangaliso – also a pseudonym – a visual artist in his 20s, who sometimes participated in the Saturday group, and who had worked for Lisa and helped her with several projects over the years. I also interviewed Lisa and discussed with her on several occasions, as well as with one of the senior crafters, here called Mama Lea.

4.1.4 Drama project

The official aim of the theatre programme in the community centre is to enhance the participants' confidence and skills in public speaking, acting, self-discipline, communication and mutual respect. Through theatre, the children are helped to work through issues that concern their daily lives. The children's sense of empathy for different personalities and cultures, for instance, is improved.

The theatre of the community centre runs after-school programmes for children and youth in the inner city of Johannesburg. The theatre operates in its own space within the compound. It includes a big auditorium with stage, two rehearsing rooms, director's office and a few backstage rooms. The lightly lit theatre operates from Monday to Friday, and holds shows and performances during the weekends as well. Often, I encountered small children, not part of the drama groups, spending time in the theatre facilities. Especially popular was to inhabit the director Harry's room, and play with the two computers in the room while other children were watching. The drama group I studied was involved in one of a few productions running in the theatre at the same time. The group was rehearsing a play on ethnic conflict that had taken place in another African country. For the sake of readability, I call the play "Mutuzo" in this report.⁸ The play had been in their programme for about a year, and during my stay they rehearsed for a theatre competition. I was lucky to be present when the competition took place, and could see the final version of their play.

⁸ In order to maintain anonymity of the community centre, the theatre group, as well as the research participants, the theme of the play is described in terms that do not make it recognizable.

In the cast, there were eleven devoted young thespians, six actresses and five actors, from 13 to 18 years of age.⁹ Their director, here called “is Llebogang, was then a drama student in her 20s. The drama group met every day after school. In principle, the theatre trainings took place from 3 pm. to 5 pm., but because of the end of year exams at school, they often came to the theatre already after the exams had finished in the morning. Therefore, on many days the rehearsals – run by the participants themselves until Sis Llebogang came usually in the afternoon – lasted from 5 to 6 hours. During this time, the performers often sat down on the floor of the rehearsal room and watched videos of inspiring dancers from someone’s phone, or played games on the laptop of one of the participants. They also practiced the lines of the play – alone in the corner, or all together – practiced the dances, or just relaxed and chatted. The discussions took place mostly in a mixture of their native languages, which I did not understand. With me, and sometimes with each other, they spoke in English, or often English mixed with Zulu and Xhosa.

It is important to note that the participants of the drama project come from very different backgrounds. Some of them, children of affluent parents, came from the extremely wealthy neighbourhoods of Johannesburg, while others lived in an orphanage. Most of the twelve participants, however, came from the surrounding neighbourhoods of the community centre, from ethnically mixed and socio-economically underprivileged areas. It was not obvious from the external appearances of the youth, or from how they talked, what their economic situation was. Many participants ended up in the theatre through their teachers, who had told them about the theatre, and some of them had looked for a community theatre on their own, and found this one. For most of the drama participants, this theatre was the first one they became involved with, while a few had taken part in theatre productions in their schools before. The two boys who had been part of their school theatres, had left the school theatre for this one due to time restrictions. They said they preferred this theatre because they learned more here than in the school theatre.

⁹ The drama participants are referred to with pseudonyms: Awande, Beatrice, Nkhesane, Neo, Bebetho, David, Thato, Tinyiko, and Nhlamulo.

4.2 Projects in comparison

The two projects of this research are different in many ways. One difference is the type of creative activity carried out in the projects. Art and crafts is more independent work, resulting in a durable, material handicraft. The drama group on the other hand, practicing performance art within a closed circle of people, creates a production where each person's creativity, intellect, emotions, body, voice and personality is employed for the sake of a shared process and outcome, performed to a live audience. The type of action in the drama group could be called "we-intention" activity and the ACP's an "I-intention" activity, as Abraham Roth has distinguished between acts of shared and individual agency. (Roth 2011.) The products of the arts and crafts project were income-generating, which also makes the project different from the drama project, which did not involve the income aspect. Therefore, the participants of the ACP, many of whom had to be wholly or partially self-sufficient, were on average older than the drama group participants. The schedules were also such that young people still going to high school or college could not have attended the ACP, which started its days already at nine in the morning. The drama group, on the other hand, had an upper age limit – its oldest participants were in high school. The youngest interviewee in the arts and crafts project was 19 and the oldest was 28, while the ages of the interviewees in the drama group ranged from 13 to 18. This of course means that the participants of this study are at different stages of their lives, with some participants facing a huge pressure to be self-sufficient and survive in the hectic city, while the others were still at school, knowing how they would spend the upcoming years, and yet others economically secure thanks to their parents. Naturally, the economic pressure influences also the younger participants whose economic background does not guarantee their completing high school, or being able to continue studies further. Another difference to acknowledge is that while the oldest participants were born just before or during the formal end of apartheid in 1994, the youngest ones were born in the so called New South Africa. During the ten years between the childhoods of the oldest and the youngest participants, South Africa and especially its cities have experienced a tremendous transformation.

The way the participants found their way into the projects also varied. While most of the drama participants found the group precisely because they were looking for a drama group, many of the ACP participants found the project through relatives or another project they were participating in, when trying to look for something to do after discontinuing high-school, or after quitting another training or job. However, all of the ACP participants I interviewed were, if not from the beginning, by the time of the interview, continued to participate in the project not because they “needed to do something”, but because they enjoyed it.

The projects are very different in many ways, keeping in mind that they had different directors and different facilitators. Is there anything in common that a study combining these two projects could benefit from? The reasons I ended up conducting research in this kind of a setting were both practical and methodological. The reasons I decided to stick with both projects till the phase of reporting the study, are both methodological, ethical, and theoretical. I started the research in the ACP, to which I had been invited by the director, Lisa. Concerned that the interview material from the ACP would not suffice to make a solid study, and being interested in the similarities and differences between the two projects, I was happy to be invited to expand my research to one of the drama groups. After having interviewed members of both projects, I did not want to leave out one of them from the analysis, as I maintain that would have been an unethical choice to make.

The methodological grounds for sticking with the two projects are based on curiosity about ideas and insights that could only come up when thinking about two contrasting projects together. Law and Urry address the problem that our current methods in social sciences are preoccupied “with fixing, with demarcating, with separating” (Law and Urry 2004, 403). In order to challenge this preoccupation, one has to take a risk and resist the seemingly comfortable demarcations – such as the type of creativity, age of the participants, or social dynamics of the projects. Even if I end up with new categorizations in the course of the study – also a type of fixation Law and Urry criticize – I see that the choice of keeping the two projects together in the analysis has been

fruitful. First, it has helped question and re-think the interpretations about the influence of creative action I might have made based on only one of the projects . Secondly, the commonalities of the project participants' experiences, which could not have been reduced to, for example, the type of creativity, or age of the person, clarified the importance of the community centre as a space, and directed the analysis to that of space. In summary, having two different contrasting projects under scrutiny strengthened the analysis and made different factors influencing the project experience more visible.

4.3 Methodological perspective: Hermeneutic Approach

Throughout the study, I have employed a hermeneutic approach to conducting research. Max Alvesson and Kaj Sköldbberg, in their *book Reflexive Methodology – New vistas for qualitative research*, present that the hermeneutic interpretation constantly alternates between different aspects regarding the studied questions, which all contain arguments for or against the interpretation. (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2009, 92-96.) Having been looked at from various perspectives, made into interpretations which are again looked at from different angles, criticised and scrutinised, the research material finally provides the researcher with the final interpretation, the 'fact'.

What is interpreted in a hermeneutic study "is not 'facts' or 'data', but text" (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000, 61). As opposed to facts or data, a text is inherently subjective, admittedly produced by a person or persons, and explicitly partial. A "text" in hermeneutics can be literal and consist of written or spoken words, but it can also consist of concrete acts, which are regarded as meaningful symbols. (Ibid.) In this study the text consists of both literal texts – the transcribed interviews, my field and research diaries, and leaflets and other written products about the projects – and acts, which are observations I made about the projects that did not have literal or verbal form.

Alvesson and Sköldbberg contrast the hermeneutic approach strongly with grounded

theory, because in a hermeneutic study the ‘facts’ “emerge from the text via a process of interpretation” (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000, 61), while grounded theory sees the material of the study, the ‘data’, as filled with facts, upon which the interpretation and theory are developed (ibid., chapter 2). In hermeneutic study the ‘facts’ “are results, not points of departure” (ibid., 61). Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin, developers of grounded theory, write that “grounded theory is a *general methodology* for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed. Theory evolves during actual research, and it does this through continuous interplay between analysis and data collection. (...) the method is often referred to as *the constant comparative method*” (Strauss and Corbin 1994, 273).

Clearly, hermeneutics and grounded theory have commonalities: a continuous back-and-forth process, where data collection and analysis contribute to each other’s development. This study is not “grounded theory”, because I neither develop a theory based on the study, nor do I code and quantify the data – a method typical to grounded theory – beyond the elementary categories presented in the titles of chapter 6 and 7. Rather, I present some ‘facts’, and discuss them with existing theories, as in hermeneutic approach. Alvesson and Sköldbberg’s main criticism for grounded theory approach is, is its idea of “seeing the facts as they are”, and then creating a theory based on the collection of these facts. They point out the impossibility of going around as a *tabula rasa*, open to any possible interpretations that the empirical context might inspire. Alvesson and Sköldbberg argue that the context would not inspire anything at all without a pre-existing theoretical frame of understanding, whether the theories would derive from a lay, or from an academic theorisation. (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2009, 56-75). I accept the criticism of Alvesson and Sköldbberg, and recognise that my empiric research was heavily influenced by both lay and academic understanding of what I anticipated would be important aspects to study in the research setting. These understandings changed and crystallised along the way, but were still influenced by my pre-understandings of the topics.

However, despite this seeming incompatibility of hermeneutics and grounded theory, and although my approach to the analysis and results of the study derive from

hermeneutics, some aspects of the study have been inspired by grounded theory. From grounded theory, I have adopted the idea that there is no clear path to doing research, and that the researcher should not decide on a narrow research topic to be studied, but rather develop the research questions together with the research participants. Even though I did not formulate the research problem together with the participants, the direction which the interviews took, when I encouraged the participants to talk about what was important for them in the projects, indirectly guided the formulation of the research problem.

During the hermeneutic interpretation and re-interpretation process, the researcher changes their frames of reference, which helps them to come up with new 'facts' upon whose emergence old 'facts' disappear. Placing the text in different contexts plays important part in the finding of the new 'facts'. (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000, 61-62.) Some of the contexts through which I have looked at the text of this study, since the planning stages of the field work are: the effects of creative action on individual psychology, racialized society, and socioeconomic conditions of the people in the text (myself included), enhancement of individual capabilities, the practice of learning, and the idea of peer support.

A hermeneutic researcher engages in an active reading of the text (reading in its literal as well as metaphorical meaning), which consists of listening to the text carefully as a whole. In a dialogue with the text the researcher proposes questions to the text, and searches for answers to those in the text in order to ask better, more specific questions. (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000). In addition to being in dialogue with the text, the author is in an imagined dialogue with the readers of the interpretation. The imagined readers of this report are, in addition to the development scholars who will assess this thesis, and the other possible readers from the field of development studies and social sciences, also the participants of the study, and perhaps other stakeholders, such as policy makers. I try to present the concepts, theoretical and methodological background in a manner that is readable to these imagined groups of readers.

Alvesson and Sköldberg differentiate between two different kinds of hermeneutic

approaches: objective hermeneutics and alethic hermeneutics. The first one differentiates the subject and the object of the research; the subject being the researcher and the object being the text. Alethic hermeneutics emphasises that the line between the object and the subject is artificial. The reason alethic hermeneutics loses the object-subject dichotomy is that inevitably, the researchers carry with them their own frames of reference, which influences the interpretations they make of the text. This causes the potential autonomy of the text to cease, thus there is not really an autonomous object. (Alvesson and Sköldbberg 2000, 68-70.)

While I would not want to cause the voice and the input of the people in my “text” to cease by pretending that the interviewees and I were one and the same entity having a monologue, I feel it is still risky to claim that we have had a dialogue in equal terms. I took measures to increase the equality of me and the interviewees by arranging the interview situations in as non-hierarchic an atmosphere as possible¹⁰, and consulting the interviewees about the interpretations after the first full version of the text was written. Even with these measures, the study is still influenced more by my “frames of reference” than by the interviewees’, even though my encounters with them inspired huge changes in my frames of reference. In that sense, I am more bound to the alethic understanding, where the emphasis is on the “new understanding” expressed by me in this text, with the sources of the understanding not traceable back to either me as a subject or the text as an object.

Different ontological, epistemological and ethical understandings of the *telos* and possibilities of social science strive to understand how science should be done. The main fields of research that I have considered in this study, also in this regard, are: youth and children studies, critical feminist perspective, post-colonial theory, reflexive methodology, and critical theory. Within all of these fields, there are many lines of thought, contradictory both within and between them. I have picked ideas and policies

¹⁰ I for example told the interviewees about my own personal interest towards and experiences of the topic, and asked them their opinions about my interpretations, as well as welcomed them to comment on my interview questions.

for writing from each one of them, depending on what I see as coherent for the main ethical, methodological and theoretical stances of the thesis. For example, while Donna Eder and Laura Fingerson emphasise that it is important to represent youth in their own terms, because that “helps to maintain their power in a research interaction”, and “preserves their conceptions and meanings in the analysis of the text” (Eder and Fingerson 2003), others disagree and see the question of representation as much more problematic than using the terms the youth themselves use. Mats Alvesson and Kaj Skölberg present that for social science to be something else than outspoken common sense, researchers have to make new concepts that encapsulate something deeper and wider about the experience of the research subjects than what they themselves verbalise. (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000.) Also bell hooks highlights that the emancipatory power of science draws from the fact that there are concepts that are not used in everyday language. These concepts capture something wider and deeper than the everyday concepts do, and thus allow us to transcend the everyday experiences, emotions and thoughts we have, and to understand the parts of the everyday in relation to wider structures. (hooks 1994.) To solve the question of using the interviewees’ language versus analytic concepts, I provide relatively long pieces of interview transcripts where the interviewees’ choice of words becomes visible, but I will not use the concepts of the interviewees as analytic categories, as I do not feel that would allow for transcending the common-sense level of understanding the phenomena. By showing the research transcripts in length, I also try to make the research process and my own role in the interviews more transparent.

When writing about the research, I usually use the first person "I" instead of the “researcher”, “we”, or speaking in a passive tense, if the subject of the action is me, the researcher alone. According to Gayle Letherby, using the first person singular tense “I” in academic writing is a way of challenging traditional styles of academic writing, which distance the researcher from the research, and present the research in a way that appears objective. Concealing the subjective researcher from the text “implies that they have no involvement with and no responsibility for what we write” (Letherby 2003, 7), which is not my intention here.

4.4 Interviews and interview ethics

As mentioned earlier, the theme of the interviews, which I also presented to the interviewees, was the meaning of the two creative projects to the project participants in a community centre in Johannesburg. The research question, which I presented to the interviewees was: "The act of doing – the implications of creative action to personal and social well-being". While it was very broad, and relatively non-restrictive in terms of the focus the study would eventually have, it still captures the main interest that I had since the beginning of the research process.

I adopt the view that interview knowledge is produced in the interview context (see Kvale and Brinkmann 2009; Rapley 2001; Finlay 2002; Law and Urry 2004). Kvale and Brinkmann suggest that the knowledge produced in the interviews is co-constructed by the interviewee and the interviewer, and that the production process continues in the transcription, analysis and reporting of the initial interviews. As Kvale and Brinkman point out, the analysis of the interview situation can focus on the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, or on the "knowledge produced inter the views of the interviewer and the interviewee" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 54). In this research, the emphasis is on the "knowledge produced inter the views", but in order to interpret that, analysis of the interaction is also necessary. Timothy Rapley emphasizes how in the analysis of interviews, and writing about them, the interviewer and their influence in what has been said is often hidden. (Rapley 2001)

In seriously considering 'how the interview comes off', we should focus on the actual lived practice of the interview. [...] *And the interviewer is a central and active participant in the interaction.* [...] [S]uch talk should *not* be viewed as decontextual: it is always produced in negotiation with the interviewer. (Rapley 2001, 317)

I conducted eighteen interviews in total. In the ACP project, I conducted four interviews with the participants, two with staff members, and one with a visual artist affiliated to the ACP. In addition to the interviews, I also talked with the participants

and with the staff members outside of the interviews, and spent a few days in the project observing its everyday life. As the research project was narrowed down, and focused on the two projects from the point of view of participants who engaged with the projects regularly, I was unable to use the interview with the visual artist. In the drama project, I interviewed ten participants. Altogether, there were eleven participants, but I was not able to interview one of them. I wonder if more results could have been obtained, would that one interview taken place. With one of the drama participants, as well as with Harry, I also sent a couple of e-mails afterwards, where I asked some follow-up questions and received valuable answers. I also interviewed Harry, and discussed with him a few times outside of the formal interview setting. Unfortunately, due to time restrictions, I was also unable to arrange an interview the facilitator of the drama cast, Sis Llebogang. I also spent some days sitting around and talking informally with the cast in the drama project. I followed their preparations for a theatre competition back-stage, and they tried to teach me a dance they were practicing for the performance.

The interview style I adopted was semi-structured, thematised interviews. I introduced the themes to the interviewees in the beginning of the interview. Before each interview, I prepared a few customized questions based on the interviewee that varied according to what I already knew about them and what the earlier interviews had suggested would be important questions to discuss. In this way, the analysis was carried out along the interview process. For example, in the first interviews I asked more questions about the future plans of the interviewees, but as that ceased to be the focus of the research, the focus shifted to other questions in the later interviews.

All of the interviews were conducted within the compound of the community centre. Two of them took place outdoors, in the backyard of the project, and all others were held in peaceful rooms inside the project buildings. This example of the beginning of an interview, from one with Lerato, a crafter, illustrates how the interviews started with a presentation of the themes of the interview:

Okay, so, I thought the interview could be very open and conversational - I don't have very strict

questions, because I think when I don't know you, how could I know what to ask very strictly. But I prepared some themes that I thought would be interesting and important to discuss. Ah, first one, just about like general feelings you have about doing arts in this project - and crafts in this project - and how the project has been for you. Then, what did you do before the project - and maybe, has the project changed your life in one way or another. And then thirdly, if you would like to describe the skills you've learned from the other people for you doing crafts, ah, then we could talk about the actual works that you've been doing, like this one and the other ones, and, ah, and then maybe about your future

The reason for choosing semi-structured interviews is based on the understanding that coming from a vastly different social, lingual, economic, cultural, political, and racial background compared to the research participants, and without having much time to get to know the interviewees outside of the interview situations – and thus to understand them and their lives very well – more strictly structured questions would have easily become too leading, and would have excluded topics that were important for the project participants. The interviews served both as discussions where I could learn from the interviewees about the themes of common interest (the project and its meaning for the interviewee), and also as occasions to get to know the interviewees better so that I could understand what they are saying, better.

Shulamit Reinharz has suggested that what is common amongst feminist methodologists, even though their opinions might differ in many other aspects, is that they have a friendly, loving attitude towards the interviewees (Reinharz 1992). I think it was friendlier – in addition to the fact that I was genuinely interested in them as persons – to give the interviewees space to talk about subjects important to them more widely, than only asking about the specific issue that I would have thought would have given answers to my original research questions. Discussing the other aspects of the interviewees' lives also helped to locate the projects in the context of their lives, which was very important for answering the research questions. Sharing personal histories applied also to myself. I elaborated on my personal history regarding the

research topic, so that the interviewees could understand and interpret where I am coming from with the questions, and have a chance to comment on that.

Before starting the first interview, and prior to the following interviews, I followed Steinar Kvale and Svend Brinkmann's interview plan guide of "seven stages of research interviewing" (2009, 19–20), and considered their ethical implications (ibid., 63). The stages of the interview process according to them are: 1) thematising the interview project, 2) designing, 3) interviewing, 4) transcribing, 5) analysing, 6) verifying, and 7) reporting (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 19–20). Kvale and Brinkmann suggest, that the ethical implication for the first stage, thematising the interview, is that beyond the scientific value of knowledge sought, the interview study should also be considered "with regard to improvement of the human situations investigated." The ethical issues linked to the designing stage consisted of obtaining an informed consent from the interviewees, securing their confidentiality, and considering what are the possible consequences of the study for the subjects. In both of the projects where I conducted interviews, I went through who I am, what I am doing, what a master's thesis means in Finland, what I am interested in, and what kind of interview technique I would employ. I presented these both when I introduced the research to the whole group with their facilitators, and again at the beginning of each interview. I also emphasised that they do not have to tell me anything they do not feel comfortable sharing, but also that they could say anything without having to fear that I would disclose any material that could cause harm to them or the people surrounding them. I also informed that the projects and the interviewees would be anonymised in the final report. I also promised that I would send them the first draft of the study with a summary of its results, so that they would get an opportunity to comment on it, and ask me to take away their interviews, if they so wished.

Kvale and Brinkmann suggest that the "personal consequences of the interview interaction for the subjects need to be taken into account" (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 63). This kind of consequences are "stress during the interview and changes in self-understanding" (ibid.). When transcribing, the researcher must protect the confidentiality of the interviewees and consider whether a transcribed text is loyal to

the interviewee's oral statements. In the drama project, I also sent a guardians' consent form to participants' homes to be filled by their guardians (see appendix 2). In the analysing phase, the ethical issues involved are the question of how penetratingly the interviews can be analysed and of whether the subjects have a say in how their statements are interpreted. When verifying the findings, "[i]t is the researcher's ethical responsibility to report knowledge that is as secured and verified as possible." As Kvale and Brinkmann write, "this involves the issue of how critically an interviewee may be questioned" (ibid.), but it also involves the question of what kind of knowledge the research aims to produce.

In the final stage, the reporting stage, Kvale and Brinkmann come back to the important questions of confidentiality and the consequences of the published study for the participants of the study and for the groups they belong to." (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009, 63.) I decided to use pseudonyms for the interviewees. Apart from pseudonyms I also utilize other measures that make the participants unrecognizable even for each other when I think the issue in question might be sensitive.

Carolyn Ellis and Leigh Berger (2003) scrutinise different ways of moving away from a traditional way of interviewing where the interviewer asks and the interviewees' task is to respond, without much room for negotiation on, or change of, the focus of the interview. The reflexive-dyadic interview aims at creating an interview situation between two equals, rather than a hierarchical question-and-answer model of interview. In research that employs reflexive-dyadic interview style, the interviewers often "reflect deeply on the personal experience that brought them to the topic, what they learned about and from themselves and their emotional responses in the course of the interview, and/or how they used knowledge of the self or the topic at hand to understand what the interviewee was saying" (Ellis and Leigh 2003, 471–472). The researcher discloses their personal experience, because they feel a "a reciprocal desire to disclose, given the intimacy of the details shared by the interviewee" (Ellis and Leigh 2003, 471–472). It is important to note the order of the disclosing: the interviewee discloses first, and the interviewer second. The purpose is not to

encourage the interviewee to disclose intimate issues by pressuring them to share similar kind of experiences than the interviewer has shared.

The following extract from an interview with Nhlamulo, a 17-year-old drama group member, shows how the interviews in this study were sometimes “reflective dyadic”:

- Ella: Okay, I understand. Aa, when you said you have become more talkative, is it because you have rehearsed to talk a lot here, or what is it that has helped you to become more talkative?
- Nhlamulo: Okay, when, when, someone talks, (on the other side when they talk), you know, I feel like there is noise... If I keep quiet that noise will be there, then I have to talk so that it will be fine, you know
- Ella: You feel that if you don't say anything and the other people-
- Nhlamulo: -are talking-
- Ella: -speak, it disturbs you, but when you participate, it doesn't disturb you?
- Nhlamulo: Yeah
- Ella: Okay, yeah. Why, why is that, do you know?
- Nhlamulo: You know when you keep quiet, you start to have, you start thinking. You don't know what you're thinking about, but you start thinking, so for me to avoid that, I have to talk
- Ella: Uhum, so that you are present- at the communication?
- Nhlamulo: Yeah. Yeah, if I keep quiet and then the other side they talk, to be like {}()
- Ella: Okay. And then you also, when you talk, you give something from yourselves to others, right
- Nhlamulo: Exactly.
- Ella: Yeah, yeah. So that is, and that is how you create bonds between people, would you say?
- Nhlamulo: Yeah
- Ella: And create friendships; if you don't participate yourself, then you cannot connect
- Nhlamulo: Yeah. If I don't participate, I won't do anything. But if I talk, I participate, everything is going to be fine
- Ella: Yeah, yeah I agree! Yeah, maybe I'm similar, but I think personally I'm a bit shy, at least sometimes, but then when you just put yourself to be part, then you get so much more from the social situation
- Nhlamulo: Yeah

One of the shortcomings in my interview technique was that, when moving from one theme to another, I did not indicate that I am moving on, and that the interviewee could add anything they might have on mind before changing the subject. Donna Eder reminds us of how it is under the control of the interviewer to decide on the pace of the interview, and suggests that it would increase the opportunity of the interviewee to express herself fully, if they were told when the interviewer is about to change the topic. (Eder and Fingerson 2003.) I did not always remember to do this. Although at the end of each interview I did ask whether there was still something the interviewee wanted to add, it is unlikely that the interviewees would have remembered something they had in mind during the interview in retrospect. Also, when the interview is about to end and the interviewee is prepared to leave, the interview situation in which case they might not be willing to stop to think whether they had something in mind earlier. Another shortcoming of the interviews was that sometimes the time allocated for the interview was too short, both due to my schedules and those of the interviewees.

4.5 On researching young people

How young people have been viewed as objects or subjects of research has changed over the last decades. While before the 1990s, children and young people were considered vulnerable and incompetent, in the 1990s some researchers began to see young people as “competent social actors who transform their own social worlds” (Ergler and Wood 2014, 397–398). This led to a shift in the subject-object position of young people in research: while before they had been viewed as objects of research, observed and analysed by the researchers, now it became more common to try to include young people as more equal co-researchers. (Ergler and Wood 2014). How young people are viewed and talked about in research has many ethical consequences. One is the reliability of research: were the young research participants really listened to, were they addressed in a language that they were able to understand, and was it explained to them well enough, what the research is about, and what conducting research in general means? In all of these questions, the age and the experience of the research participants must be considered, so that the researcher can actually obtain

informed consent, and so that research participants can take into consideration and assess the nature of the study.

On the other hand, when research is public, it is important to consider its political nature. Will the research support the view that young people need protection and advocacy, in certain regards, because of their vulnerable position in the society, or will the research support the view that young people are able to take care of themselves to a large extent? Even though these questions are necessarily dependent on the specific questions, they are important to consider whenever studying young people, if only because in most countries governments and other powerful agents, such as schools and parents, have direct policies specifically addressed at young people.

Even though there has been willingness to include young people as co-researchers, it has proved problematic. Despite the efforts and rhetoric of participatory research with young people, “participatory research is generally adult-led, adult-designed and conceived from an adult perspective” (Kellet et. al. 2004, 329 in Ergler and Wood 2015, 398). Christina Ergler and Bronwyn Wood use Porter’s distinction of child-centred and child-focused research. Child-centred research describes the kind of research where children play a big role in research design and conduct, while in child-focused research, children and young people are valued and taken seriously, but the power over the research topic is largely retained by adults. Successful child-centred research can challenge adult-centric definitions, pre-set conceptions and understandings. (Wood and Ergler 2014, 398.)

In this research, some of the research participants were older than the researcher herself (then 25), while the youngest was a 13-year-old. Age plays different roles in different aspects of the research, and it is impossible to define the whole research as “child-centred” or “child-focused”. In addition, the physical age as defining whether someone is “child”, or “young”, or “adult” has proven controversial. In the context of this research, there are a few important points of departure where the definition of research participants as being “young” is important. Because most of the drama group participants were under 18-year-olds, their facilitator, Llebogang, suggested that

guardian consent forms should be obtained for every participant under eighteen. (See appendix 1.) I received the consent forms from all but one participant, who said they will bring the forms after the interviews, as to not to mix up the interview schedule. As we agreed with her, that interview is not used in this research, as I did not receive the guardian's consent form from her.

5 Findings

In the following chapters, I present the main findings of the research. The analysis has been made through a hermeneutic process of posing questions to the “data”, both when creating it in the form of interviews and observations, and when writing the research report. Along the way, the questions became progressively narrower, until the data gathered provided answers for the most important questions. In chapter six, I discuss the findings from a critical angle, while highlighting the questions which were not answered by this research.

I will first, in section 5.1, look findings from the Arts and Crafts project, which were specific to this project. These were: learning practical crafts skills, self-reflection time, stress-free environment and crafts skills influencing the status of a woman. Section 5.2 discusses learning in the drama project as inspired by the topic of the play, as well as learning in the project as compared to learning at school. Because the drama group members all attended school by the time of the study, it was convenient to talk about school and compare how the learning process differed between the classroom and the rehearsal room. Section 5.3 discusses how the different nature of the projects influence the impact the projects had on their participants. Section 5.4 analyses the “sense of home” in both projects through Sara Ahmed's concept of orientation.

5.1 Arts and Craft Project

The ACP participants I interviewed for the research had participated in the project for different durations of time: Lerato, Themba, and Siboniso approximately for a year, and Tsholofelo for a couple of years. Themba, Siboniso, and Tsholofelo had moved to

Johannesburg from the provinces of Kwa-Zulu Natal and Eastern Cape in the countryside, while Lerato had lived in Johannesburg all her life. The ACP participants perceived Johannesburg as a city full of opportunities, openness and diversity. They felt that they had better chances to find work in Johannesburg than in the rural areas. Only Tsholofelo planned to go back to her countryside home in the future, to establish a sewing project there. The ACP played an important role in the lives of the young adult participants, who were trying to navigate the city and its opportunities to meet their needs for income generation, learning practical skills for future employment and networking and social skills for life. The ACP was a place of a little income, but also importantly, a place for self-development and social connection. In this section I look at four aspects of the project that were highlighted in the interviews of the ACP participants. These are: learning social and networking skills, having a stress-free environment, arts and crafts as a meditative practice, and the impact of crafts skills to how others perceived the person.

5.1.1 “Working with people is not a small thing, ne?” - Learning Social Skills in the ACP

While the ACP participants did view learning the crafts skills as a valuable asset for their life today and in future, the social skills they learned from the project were also viewed as very important.

Ella: Do you feel you have learnt something about yourself? In the project, for example-

Lerato: Yes, I feel, yeah I do, like- can I explain it?

Ella: Yes! Please, if you want to

Lerato: Like, like when I'm here, like, I'm learning that I have to work with people, *ne*. Working with people is not a small thing, *ne*. Like, you have to be patient. Yeah, that's what I'm learning here, to be patient, to love, yeah, to accept. So that's what I'm learning from being in this project, it's just giving me that. So, if I go outside, I can know how to, if I open my own business or something, I will be knowing how to treat people, how to communicate with people, you know, yeah

Lerato, an ACP participant, emphasises the learning of social skills; working with people. She specifies that she has learned to be patient, to accept, and to love in the

project. I later asked in which ways the project had helped her. She replied, “it helped me to love, it really helped me a lot to lean on someone.”

One of the aims of the project is to provide a safe space for the project participants. Many of the ACP participants had to quit school because of financial issues. Some of them found the project through a girls’ centre in which they lived before. Being survivors of harsh living conditions, the project served as a very important place encouraging both trusting in oneself, and in others. Networking and working with other projects and professionals, in the exhibitions the project’s crafts products were sold in, was brought up as an important aspect of the project. The ACP participants also attended workshops in other crafts projects, which were regarded as very valuable for the learning that took place in the workshops. “My mind becomes more and more open [in the workshops]”, as Tsholofelo said. According to the ACP participants’ interviews, the project enhanced the social and cooperation skills of the participants, which could benefit them both in their professional and in private lives.

Learning to co-operate, to “get along”, was also something the interviewees in Zanele Mzaku’s master’s thesis research emphasised as being one of the main outcomes of their community arts participation. Kenneth Nkosi, one of the most well-known South African actors, said, years after the community theatre experience: “So there’s so much that I got taught [in the community theatre]... you’ve got to get along with people, you work with people here” (Kenneth Nkosi in an interview, in Mzaku 2013, 59).

5.1.2 “When you are here, you don’t have to stress”

Life in Johannesburg is too fast, you have to stand on your own feet. Because if you don't stand on your own feet, you don't earn any money, you won't get... You end up being a street kid or being homeless outside.

In the above quotation, Siboniso, a 24-year-old ACP participant, described the economic pressure he and many of the ACP participants had. In the context of a stressful life situation, where the participants struggled to make ends meet every

month, and where they had come to the big city in search of better opportunities, the ACP was an important space where the participants could for a moment put their worries aside, and concentrate on the act of craft-making. In addition to having work to do, they also appreciated the supportive social environment. Even though life in Johannesburg was perceived as being very stressful and “hectic”, where they were more dependent on money than in their countryside homes, the participants wanted to stay in the city.

In addition to the professional networks the ACP participants became part of, the participants held the social support of the staff members and other project participants in high esteem. Also, the older crafters and the participants from the Saturday group, were regarded to be an important source of support in the project. They gave advice to the younger ones and to each other when there was a job opening somewhere, or when someone had problems in relationships or other areas of life.

Everyone I interviewed from the arts and crafts group expressed they “loved” being part of it. The reasons the interviewees gave for this positive feeling were the social support, friendships, and learning, as mentioned earlier. Yet another prevalent reason for this was that the participants felt they enjoyed the work they had in the ACP.

Themba, a 20-year-old ACP participant formulated it this way:

I feel happy - why: because I'm doing what I want. You see, sometimes it becomes, like if you are doing this, and you don't want it, it becomes difficult, and it gives you stress. Because you are doing what you don't want to do. So, to me, it's fine, I'm happy here.

Themba had been working with his hands a lot already before, and knew he likes making crafts even before joining the project. This was not the case with everyone. Lerato ended up in the project without choosing it herself, and did not like it in the beginning. In the beginning she was “sooo bored”, but after a while her attitude changed: “because sometimes you, you find things boring, but immediately when you stick to it, it's whereby you see it's not boring, it's very interesting.” After having said she was bored, Lerato added, that it was because she did not know the people, and was not able to connect with them. She said that when she started to connect with the

people, she started to enjoy the project a lot. This emphasises the importance of the social environment for the overall experience of the project. The project also offered Lerato an opportunity to practice perseverance, as she struggled through the boring and socially uncomfortable beginning phase in the project.

The ACP participants, without an exception, mentioned that they felt less stressed in the project than outside of it. In addition to the support from the other people in the project, another reason for less stress frequently mentioned was that they had work to do.

Here I'm not just in a location thinking about my next step. I don't have to stress about anything, the only stress I have is my work... that thing reduces my stress, because when I'm thinking, I'm just thinking about the design. (Siboniso, ACP participant)

5.1.3 Reflection time

Making crafts provided the ACP participants with self-reflection time. Tsholofelo, a 28-year-old participant explained, making crafts helped her to recognize, and to deal with her emotions. She explained that when she did crafts, she could recognize more clearly how she felt. After recognizing the emotions, she could choose which work suited her emotional state: "If you are angry you cannot embroider, it becomes ugly, so you see now you have to do knitting". She said she calmed down when she started to knit, and when she was happy, she could sew with the machine or do embroidery. Tsholofelo had many craftworks in process at the same time. However, the possibility of working with many kinds of products at the same time was not as available to all the ACP participants. Some of the interviewees who had recently joined the project, for example, could not use the sewing machine, as they had not been trained for that yet. But the ability to change from one type of work to another, based on one's mood, was not a prerogative for experiencing the calming effect of craft-making. Lerato, who was one of the participants who could not enjoy as big a variety of craft making as Tsholofelo was, also reported that doing crafts was soothing to her mind. Making crafts, both when a variety of different techniques – embroidery, knitting, or machine

sewing – was available, but also when only few techniques were available, was reported to have a mind calming effect on the ACP participants.

5.1.4 Status within family and beyond

Another implication of learning new practical skills was the hope of elevating one's status through crafts skills. Tsholofelo described the importance of having practical skills for a woman:

As a woman, I have seen we don't have the same choices as men do. I've seen a difference here in Joburg and in the rural areas. There is a difference. Because in Eastern Cape you know when you are a grown up, and a woman, you have to get married. They don't tell you about going to school or about doing something. If you're lucky, then your grandmother has a machine and she will teach you. But if, yooy, if you don't have parents, then you depend on your husband. And some husbands, they cheat, so people get discouraged, they get a lot of stress. They end up getting sick, and what I've seen in Eastern Cape, some even end up on a pension because of their disability of having depression. So I want, because I've seen that if you're doing something with your hands, the chances of getting sick are very small. Because you are busy doing something. Even how stubborn the husband is, no, if you're doing something, he will support you, he will support you. But if he knows that you depend on him alone, he will play with your emotions, and sometimes you will die, very early, and leave behind your children. Man doesn't always see a woman as important, then you don't see the importance of being in a family. It's important that the work you do makes your family proud.

Tsholofelo emphasizes the respect a woman can gain from her husband and other family members, when she participates in bringing income to the household: "There are things that the man doesn't see as a woman [does] as important. So if you want to buy something, they say, 'yooy, no, you're wasting money, you're wasting money'. You see. Some of it makes you feel like 'ah'. Then you don't see the importance of being in the family." She described that bringing in income, strengthened a woman's sense of belonging to a family. Thanks to her contribution to the family income, a woman could have some power to influence the household's expenditure patterns. Being able to

support the family not only helped in financial terms, but also enabled a woman to have more decision-making power and respect in the family, Tsholofelo believed. Of course, this study cannot predict if the ACP project would help the participants gain more respect in their future marital lives, but the fact that the participant believes so, is meaningful. With the help of the skills gained from the project, Tsholofelo got motivated to plan her life in Eastern Cape, where she wanted to move and establish a sewing project for the local women. Tsholofelo had studied and worked with cooking and hairdressing prior to joining the ACP. The ACP was a project she enjoyed the most, and which she wanted to advance further. This speaks for the importance of having many different kinds of projects in community centres and other employment programmes – for Tsholofelo, who comes from a modest background and struggles to make ends meet at the end of each month, it was important to find work that satisfies her not only economically, but also psychologically.

Tsholofelo also highlighted the respect that a woman doing crafts usually acquires. It is not only about bringing in the money, she said, but also that creating something, “making something that comes from *you*, it strengthens the idea of who *you* are [in the eyes of] others.” Finding activities that satisfy one psychologically, that extend one’s personality, can be said to be important for Tsholofelo.

5.2 Drama project - Learning about the world, life, and self

The Mutuzo cast members, like the ACP participants, recounted that they learned a lot in the drama project. The topic of the play, an ethnic conflict in another African country provided them vast amount of material and questions to ponder and reflect upon. These reflections often materialized in discussions within the cast, where the participants shared their own experiences relating to questions of violence, loss, xenophobia and racism, among other topics. Based on the interviews, I categorized the subjects of learning inspired by the topic of the play into three themes. They are: “Africa”, “xenophobia” and the “question of race”, and they are discussed in sub-section 5.2.1. In section 5.2.2, I discuss the learning experience of the drama group

members as compared to their learning experience at school. Because they all attended high-school by the time of the interviews, it was natural to compare the drama group environment to that of their schools. Through this comparison, both the special features of the drama group's pedagogy and the effect of the social environment become more visible. Section 5.2.3 discusses the general view that "drama shows you, and gives you the real aspects of life", stated by Thato, one of the drama group members. The section of "real aspects of life" highlights the holistic approach of drama to *life* itself. In the last section of results specific to the drama group, I discuss the motivation to make personal choices, due to participants' responsibilities towards the drama group.

5.2.1 Africa, xenophobia, and the question of race: new perceptions in the drama group

Pan-Africanism

In the interviews, the drama group members repeatedly brought up that they do not learn about countries outside of South Africa in school. When discussing Mutuzo, the drama participants recollected that they had not heard about this population-wise middle-sized African country before the play. They felt it was very important to know about events like this conflict. The participants were passionate about spreading the word about the conflict, message being that one's ability to make a difference in the world depends on knowledge about the world affairs.

After the show I feel like I did something good, I did something that helped a lot. Even though I didn't do it perfectly, but the thing is that I helped a lot, because while I'm doing that show, there is someone who is watching that, someone who is willing to help, someone who didn't know about the massacre, but is willing to help. (Bebetho, drama group participant)

Neo, a seventeen-year-old actor gives an eloquent answer to how being part of Mutuzo has helped him learn about the world outside of South Africa. He explained how the play and its theme, ethnic cleansing, is painful for the cast:

Because the other thing that makes it feel, the play to be heavy, it's the thing you know, some things what we're doing, they have happened in our lives, so it's easy for us to connect to the play, and feel the thing that we are doing. So, that's the other thing that makes us, that makes this play to become hard for us.

I further asked him whether he felt that it was the being part of the Mutuzo cast which had helped him to understand the everyday xenophobia and racism in South Africa. I will quote how the discussion proceeded, in length:

Ella: Am, if you think about Mutuzo and what you've learned from playing in that- do you feel that you have learned something new about these, xenophobia and racism from doing the play? Did it help you to, to think about these issues in a new way?

Neo: Yes it has helped me a lot, and taught me a lot, because, I never knew about, I never noticed this thing about cultures

Ella: What do you mean?

Neo: I never noticed this culture thing, that they were separating each other – I knew it, *ne* – but I wasn't sure about it

Ella: Here in South Africa?

Neo: Yes. I never noticed it that much. I was like okay, this thing is true and it's happening. Until I came to Mutuzo. When I was doing Mutuzo I was like okay, this conflict never started in South Africa, but it started long back. So I learned that this thing, it started from our great-grand-parents and fathers, it didn't start from us. And the other thing I learned was, learning about new countries. I never knew there was [the country of the play] myself. I was shocked when I found out there was a country called [the country of the play]. Then I had to start researching on other African countries. Then I discovered a lot

Ella: What did you discover?

Neo: Like, every day like, I can say mostly every day, I always go on the internet to search about [the country of the play], how the war started and everything. Then I go to other countries, and see like maybe the situation was {}()

Ella: Uhum, which countries have you been looking at?

Neo: Like mostly I'm busy looking at Zimbabwe. I have been there, but I never researched about the history of it. So, in [the country of the play], before the war started, these people lived there, all alone, and they gave the power to one, one culture. Which made

them fight. And it's the same with Zimbabwe now, what's happening. Most people, they don't notice the war that is coming in Zimbabwe. And, on my own seeing, and the thing that happened in [the country of the play], there is a war that is going to start in Zimbabwe, that people are not noticing. Like, Mugabe has been the president of Zimbabwe like, he has been for more than thirty years as they say. And, since he's dropping, he's about to drop, he's getting old, and, any time he might leave this world, he might die. And now, people are fighting

Ella: For the power?

Neo: For the power

[Discussion continues about the power struggle in Zimbabwe, and about how Neo learned that one must speak Shona in Zimbabwe, after being beaten in jail for not understanding the language.]

Ella: Uhum. So you would say that you actually learned some historical perspective from doing Mutuzo? About these issues?

Neo: Yes, yes

I later came back to what Neo said here, and asked what had personally touched him during the preparations for the play. He then told me about two incidents. One of them was a story about how he had approached a girl from another ethnic group. The girl had rejected him, saying she cannot date a person from his ethnic group. Another incident was about a Nigerian passenger entering a taxi (a mini-bus in Johannesburg). The taxi driver, hailing from a major South African ethnic group, had insulted the Nigerian in his language, telling the Nigerian that he would not get his change if he did not speak the local language – a language which this Nigerian passenger did not understand. Neo was very upset by both incidents. The way Neo connected these everyday incidents to wider socio-historical phenomena of racism and xenophobia as structural violence, is an example of what Freire calls conscientisation (Freire 2000). Neo explained that these instances and xenophobia are expressions of one and the same thing: people being artificially made into enemies by dividing them into “cultures” and then giving power to one “culture”, to one group. In fact, this very much resembles the explanation Mahmood Mamdani gives on the post-colonial conflicts in Africa as a legacy of colonial divide-and-rule policies (Mamdani 2001).

Neo was not the only one who had started researching about other countries after having been surprised and inspired by all the information and knowledge they had

gained by researching about the country of the play. Bebetho had started searching about Nigeria, because “it just came to [his] mind that I should start searching about Nigeria”. David had started to search about Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Nigeria. The boys had been reading about the nature of these countries, about their histories, politics, and culture, from the internet. They had become interested in the existence of these countries, and wanted to learn about the environments that existed there.

It seemed that the play, by bringing another African country to their attention, had played a crucial role for the newly arisen curiosity of the young actors and actresses to research about the rest of the continent. Even though they did talk about non-African countries, such as Germany, Brazil, and Spain, these countries were only mentioned as places which they would like to visit. That the interviewees had become interested in conducting research on all of Africa, with closer neighbours that had stronger effects on their everyday lives being of more interest, reveals that the participants had begun to appreciate the connectedness of their own situation with those elsewhere in the world.

Learning about African history was an important aspect of the learning process in the drama group. Especially learning about what has happened in other parts of Africa, while South Africa was in the midst of apartheid seemed to be very interesting and important for the interviewees. This came up constantly in the discussions: “I never knew there was a war outside of South Africa”, “I never knew these countries existed”, “we are only learning about South Africa”. One of the participants said that for him, it was very important to understand that blacks have killed other blacks in other countries, too, that “this thing, this xenophobia didn’t start from us, and didn’t start now but it has been there already before.” It can be said that the participants were, thanks to the learning experiences from the Mutuzo play, better able to connect current issues to global, or more specifically, African-wide perspective.

Xenophobia

The curiosity – and the research inspired by it – towards another African country shed

new light on the themes of xenophobia and apartheid for the drama group members. Neo's experience, as a victim of xenophobia for being from a "wrong" ethnic group for dating, was described earlier. The play had given a new understanding of xenophobia not only to the ones who had been discriminated against, but also to those, who had themselves done the discriminating. David, a 17-year-old participant, and I had the following discussion about his experience of starting to re-think issues of migration:

David: [Being part of the Mutuzo cast] has been helping. It has helped a lot because I learn things. I get used to different things, and it shows- it tells me about the world, what is going around in this world. So yeah, it gives me an idea of, how, what to do when I grow up, what should I do that is rightful. Sometimes, people- let me say, a high percentage of people in South Africa; they don't know about [the country of the massacre]. So it tells me that as a human being, you must know the history of the world before you can know things, because some people out there, they are suffering, while you are sitting in a good place. It shows that there's no communication and love. So, sometimes you have to know the world, to know people.

[...]

Ella: Yeah, yeah. Have you continued researching even other countries but [the country of the massacre] as a result?

David: Yes. It's been like, ah, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria... Cause, sometimes you must know, they come to South Africa – you can see so many people here. So sometimes you must not just say these people are busy making our country a fool. You must first know about their country, and what has happened. I usually, when I see a Nigerian, I search about the country, what is happening there. The same in Zimbabwe- so that I can understand what they are going through, before discriminating.

Ella: Uhum, uhum, and when you say that this play has helped you a lot and that you've learned a lot, do you feel it's more so in Mutuzo than in the previous plays that you've done- your own learning process?

David: Yeah, Mutuzo has helped me a lot, it has inspired peace in my life, because it shows a lot. Because, not in [the country of the play] only, but still in South Africa, there is still this apartheid. People are busy with xenophobia - people don't know what other people are going through. So, it helped me a lot because of, I now *understand*. Because I was one of them who was with xenophobia. I didn't know what I was doing, I was just telling people to go [to their home countries]. I didn't know what they were going through until I found out that okay, these people are suffering. Their countries are poor; poor in food, poor in work, some people are killed. They don't know, you see. Sometimes I feel like, when I'm in South Africa - as long as this person, the colour is like my colour, the language doesn't matter. But I'll have to be- I'll have to be united with them, so that we can understand each other's problems. And even if we are different colour, I still have to be connected, the colour doesn't matter. Like as long as we are in one country, it doesn't matter what happens, whatever language you're talking. But you must know what you are

doing, who you are facing. Before I face a Nigerian, I must know the history of Nigeria, before I can just judge. I must know where that Nigerian comes from, what he has been through, what phases and challenges he was facing coming to this country, what he saw in this country.

In the above extracts from the discussions with Neo and David, as well as in the discussions with other drama group members, there are several interesting insights that reflect on the participants' changed understanding of xenophobia due to this play. Firstly, doing the play had helped the participants to place their experiences of everyday xenophobic instances in a wider picture of socio-historic processes of xenophobia, which transcends not only temporal boundaries – “I learned this didn't start from us, but it started from our great-grandparents” – but also geographical boundaries. Xenophobia did not start and is not only a South African problem, but a global problem. Secondly, the play based on a conflict within an African black community has brought the South African xenophobic environment – and at the same time apartheid – into a new light: the participants envisaged that it is possible for tensions between blacks to also escalate to even worse than what they currently were¹¹. Thirdly, the play had shed light to the personal histories and stories of the people coming to South Africa, which made it easier to empathize with them; to set oneself in their shoes and understand their perspective. In David's words: “before I can judge [...] I must know where that Nigerian comes from, what he has been through, what phases and challenges he was facing coming to this country, what he saw in this country.”

Paolo Freire in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* presents his ideas about education, revolutionary thinking, and action towards change. He states that revolution can only take place in praxis, which is a process where critical reflection – theory – and action work together to transform the oppressive structures. One of the key ideas in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is that the thinking and the doing must be practiced by one and the same person; it cannot be, that some people think and dictate what others do, if revolution is to be achieved. A system where some people monopolize the thinking part, is by definition oppressive. In this play, it is clear that the

¹¹ On xenophobia in South Africa, see for example Saul and Bond (Saul and Bond 2014).

cast members did the *thinking*, exemplified by the research they conducted themselves, and the discussions with the cast, but they also did, often but not always literally, the *acting*.

Freire states that we all acquire social myths, which have a “dominant tendency” (Freire Institute 2017). According to him, learning, is a critical process aimed at uncovering the “real problems and actual needs” beyond the myths (ibid). In societal knowledge, there are different levels. A naïve level is to be able to describe how things *are* (description which, I would say, is necessarily subjective), while a higher level is to understand the causes behind the states of affair (Freire 2000, 106–112)

Several of Freire’s ideas can be recognized in the learning process of the drama group. The social myths that have a “dominant tendency” in the drama participants’ living environment, are, regarding xenophobia, such as “the foreigners to take the jobs and women from the South African men”, and “the foreigners are more criminal, and more brutally criminal than the South Africans”. Another “mythicisation” (Freire 2000, 102), which came up in the interviews from both projects is related to street children. The interviewees brought up a prevalent understanding that the children are on the streets because they “have too many rights and do not respect their parents”. As can be grasped from Neo and David’s narration, there has been a change from a naïve knowledge of the society – that there are many foreigners in South Africa, and that there is xenophobia – to an understanding of the causes of the social phenomena. Like Neo and David, other drama too unambiguously state that now they could understand better some of the reasons for the presence of so many foreigners in South Africa:

In our home, our parents are always complaining about refugees taking their jobs and stuff like that. And as a child, you always believe that. So then when you come here, you learn about these massacres, and refugees, and immigrants, then you know why they are here.

(Awande, drama participant.)

A common understanding of xenophobia in South Africa according to the drama participants, is that it has recently arisen in South Africa due to the ‘fact’ that foreigners are “more criminal than South Africans”, and want to “cause harm” in South

Africa. When making the play, the drama members uncovered some of the xenophobic myths about foreigners in South Africa, and replaced them with a new understanding of the underlying problems and actual needs behind the myths; the problems of violence that dispossesses people from their homes, and the need to connect and live in peace.

The drama group had also made a play about the street children in their neighbourhoods. When discussing this play, the interviewees emphasized that what they learned from that play was that, unlike what they were told at school and at home, these children often have no other option than to leave their homes, where they are abused. At school, they had learned that the street children were in the streets due to their own wish for freedom. However, after having gotten to know some of them while preparing for a play about street children, they had come to realise that many of the street children ran away because of being abused, or that they were chased away from home.

Even though this is what the participants claimed to have learned, they also stated that there were criminals amongst the foreigners. Thus, they had not become naïve in a sense that they would believe none of the foreigners were criminals, but rather their understanding had changed that the foreigners were not as criminal as they were depicted.

The participants recounted many sources of knowledge that had helped them come up with a better understanding of the perspective of refugees and other immigrants. A key person had been “George”, a person who had fled the country depicted in the play, and arrived in South Africa after many years. He had been invited to come talk to the cast about his experiences. When George had arrived in South Africa, he had faced great difficulties with the South African immigration office, despite having no possibility of returning. This story had helped the participants to understand the risks the refugees and other immigrants take to come to the country – and the serious reasons that possibly lie behind taking the risk. Another source of information frequently mentioned were the movies about the very conflict, shown by the facilitator to the cast on a regular basis. In addition to the films shown to the whole cast, the

participants did their own research, and had sometimes encountered real-life footage from the conflict.

As Jonothon Neelands (2011, 171) says, “through taking and participating in a role, young people are encouraged to look at the world from other perspectives and to consider new alternatives and interpretive choices”. The cast members, when given the freedom to do so, found their own paths for the “role-taking”. While some of the cast members researched “the killings”, others sought to connect with the victims of the conflict by researching their ordinary lifestyles: what were their days like, what kind of food they ate, what were their religions, what kind of dances they had. They studied the local names the language and its dialects, and the local weddings so that their characters would be more authentic. They also read stories about the victims of the conflict in exile. Tinyiko and Awande, two girls from the drama group, had researched about the ordinary lifestyles of the people, because “usually you base on how many people died, but you are not really connecting to the people, like, how the people died, and what did like, what did they do, what kind of lives they had”. Awande continued, that “it was only about the killings, the soldiers, the bombs, the child soldiers, that was it - and the different sides of the conflict, they never said what, what kind of lives they had before the war, so we didn't get much of that. So, we had to research, research, research, research [to really feel what the conflict meant for them].”

There was a gender-divide in the way the cast members researched about the theme of the play. While the boys “researched the killings”, the girls researched the costumes, cuisine, accents and dances. That the participants could conduct research on the parts of the play that most interested them – some about killings, some about the accent and dances – made it possible that all of them could relate to the characters, and to the real people of the conflict in some way. This was one of the advantages of the project-based learning taking place in the drama group, where the curriculum was not fixed into any one perspective or prescribed by an external authority far removed from the reality on the ground. In addition to being able to relate to the character, another benefit of allowing everyone to do research and

choose a topic that they could relate to most, was that everyone became excited and more curious as a result. Had they been given topics from the top, the research paths of many of the participants would perhaps have been much more short-lived.

From the stories of the participants, one can see that being part of the play had brought better and deeper understanding of xenophobia and South African society to the drama participants. Additionally, empathy towards immigrants had strengthened, while prejudices diminished.

The question of race

Race was not an explicit topic in the play or in the discussions in the drama group. However, race came up in the discussions in the theatre, especially during the 16th of June¹², the Human Rights Day on the 21st of March, and other public holidays marking the landmark dates in the anti-apartheid struggle. But it seemed the staff members differing considerably on the importance of addressing race in the plays, and on the ways of doing it. The management and board of the community centre were nearly all-white, while the community served by the centre and the beneficiaries of the projects black. The problematics of this imbalance were well acknowledged by Harry, the theatre director, who himself wanted to connect the plays more to the history of colonialism and apartheid. (Discussions with Harry in December 2014 and May 2017.) However, in this study, I leave aside the question of how race is addressed in the theatre or the community centre in general, and how it comes up in the theatre's everyday life. This important but highly controversial and complex question could be a topic of a whole new study. Instead, I concentrate on how the drama group interviewees spoke about race in the interviews.

Despite the difficulties in discussing race in the theatre, doing Mutuzo, the play, seemed to have enhanced the participant's understanding of this issue as well. When I asked Tinyiko, Beatrice and Awande, what they had learned from the play, they started to talk about the conflict that had taken place in the country of the play, and about

¹² 16th of June is a public holiday in South Africa, "Youth Day", in remembrance of the Soweto Uprising in 1976.

how the play helped them understand the immigration phenomenon in South Africa. The discussion soon turned to whether foreigners are more criminal than South Africans on average, and from there to the issue that some foreigners hire South African blacks to commit crimes on their behalf. One of the cases discussed was the British-born Shrien Dewani, who was accused of hiring a black man to kill his Swedish-born wife in Cape Town¹³.

Awande: One of the things is that the people who did the killing – I don't know what's her name, you know the name – they are already in jail, but he is still there somewhere.

Ella: Why do you think is that?

Awande: I think, okay I think, if you are a black person, you don't get, okay, let's say if Oscar Pistorius was a black person, I think he would have got a longer sentence, but I think because he is white, he got a shorter sentence, I don't know... Because why, when a black person commits a crime, always to court. But when a white person commits a crime, it takes months. After three months maybe, but when it's a black person: ay! Yeah, why is the black person in jail before the one who hired him? Or coming to the conflict in [the country of the play], yeah, there was a conflict in Europe, and there are white people in Europe, and the media was there. But in in [the country of the play], the media was not there. Why? Is it because they are black? Yeah, that's what I've learned so far.

Through the trial cases of Oscar Pistorius and Shrien Dewani, the girls addressed the issue of institutional racism they saw around them in South Africa. In the discussion, the girls suggested that perhaps the judges are afraid of the white people, "because they have money", and that is why they are not punished the way their black criminal counterparts are. Discussions around these two legal cases were prominent amongst the wider public, and widely covered in the media, too. Still, I want to suggest that being part of the drama group, and especially making a play on the theme of an African conflict, deepened the understanding of these two cases, placing them into the bigger picture of institutional racism in the country, which the participants had become more aware of due to the play. Awande in the previous interview extracts connected the stories of Pistorius and Dewani to the media privileging coverage of conflicts amongst white people beyond conflicts of black people, and said in the end "that's what I've learned so far". This suggests that she connected the specific cases, where racism

¹³ Mr. Dewani was later released from charges by the Western Cape High Court in Cape Town. <http://www.saflii.org/za/cases/ZAWCHC/2014/188.html>

appears subtle, to bigger structures of racism, and that she made this connection by means of working with the play.

5.2.2 Learning in the drama group and at school

As the previous chapter suggests, one of the big differences in learning in the drama group, when compared to learning at school is, that learning about other countries is very minimal, if present at all, at the schools of the drama participants¹⁴. All the drama members stated that learning at school was very different from learning at the drama group. Differences they mentioned included:

At school, we only follow the textbooks, while at the theatre we follow our minds.

(Neo, drama participant)

Normally at school we learn while we're just sitting down, you adjust to things, but in drama, we learn, then we do them, yeah, express them in a way of how you see, of how you would like to express that, so yeah. What I've learned in drama, it's easy, because you learn it while you're still doing it. Then in school you learn, you learn, then sometimes you think of something else and then you forget, but that's because you didn't *do* it.

(Bebetho, drama participant.)

It's different, because when doing research in drama, you take your time and you try to understand. But at school, as long as you have that work and you know at least one or two things from that, at the end of the day, you don't know, or you end up forgetting. But when you do research in drama, the memory never perishes.

(Thato, drama participant)

In addition to the fact that the participants did not learn about countries outside of South Africa at school, another difference between school and the drama group,

¹⁴ As described in the chapter 1, the cast members come from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Still, all of them went to schools where they described that they did not learn about countries outside of South Africa. None of them went to very prestigious schools.

according to the cast members, was that at school the pupils are tied to curriculum, and are not encouraged to do their own research outside of the given didactic contents. In the drama, group the participants felt they were responsible for their learning process to themselves, to others in the cast, and to their director. What and how they learned was directly linked to the outcome of the rehearsals - the play. In the drama group, the participants did research both on their own and as part of the group, and challenged and supported each other with the research. Many of the participants also recounted the importance of getting out of the theatre space to perform in front of different audiences and different judges, who inspired and surprised them, encouraging them to strive for further progress. Also, the workshops outside of the theatre and the visiting theatre practitioners were considered good opportunities to enhance the learning experience.

It can be said that the theatre space is less established than the school environment. This is something also the director Harry named as his philosophy at the theatre; to keep the space open to surprises, to new people, and to new ideas, so that the theatre space would not become too stagnant and institutionalized. In addition to the space being more versatile at the theatre than the school space, another big difference when it came to learning in the drama as opposed to learning at school, in the accounts of the cast members, was the difference in remembering what one has learned. Many cast members said it was easier to remember, "to really learn", what one learns at the theatre, because learning in the theatre is tied to action. Bebetho's words from above "what I've learned in drama, it's easy, because you learn it while you're still doing it. Then in school you learn, you learn then sometimes you think of something else and then you forget, but that's because you didn't *do* it" supports the view already John Dewey pointed out, that practical action supports in-depth learning (Dewey 1916).

The drama participants stated that they conduct more research and are more curious, and hence learn more, in drama than at school. That the cast members felt they were not learning about other countries outside of South Africa hints at particularising, which Paulo Freire writes about in relation to non-revolutionary education: when people's hardships are presented as unique conditions prevalent only in that location

(geographical or otherwise defined), they do not see the wider connections between them and other people in similar condition, and thus cannot seek to unite against the oppression (Freire 2000). On the other hand, particularisation can apply to not only hardships, but also phenomena that can be perceived as positive. For example, nationalistic ideas about superiority of one country can be reinforced by populist rulers, just like the myth of particularity of a hardship within a region. To succeed in resisting this propaganda, the inhabitants must have an adequate understanding of other societies. Not learning about other countries makes it impossible to compare one's own country with others, and therefore hinders the understanding of one's own country in the global, historical context. This allows false particularisation of what are especially "South African" phenomena. In concentrating exclusively on apartheid, without connecting the discussion to the wider world and the differences and similarities of experiences in other African countries, or say, for instance racism in the United States, India, or Europe, or to the history of colonialism, there is a risk that some important insights into both the underlying reasons of, and possible solutions to apartheid remain undiscovered.

I later asked Neo whether he is tired – as his tone had suggested – of hearing about apartheid. He said "yes I'm tired, I'm very tired of hearing about apartheid. Although it's still here." For Neo, and for thousands of other inhabitants of South Africa, whose parents come from outside of the country, the history of apartheid is not as tightly tied to their personal histories as it is for the South-African-born. That is another reason why it could be beneficial to discuss apartheid in relation to histories and present affairs of other countries, like Zimbabwe, and in relation to global issues of race, inequality, conflicts and peace, inter alia.

5.2.3 "Drama shows you, and gives you the aspects that happen in life"

Ella: Do you mean that, in the end of the play, education comes up, even though it's not there in the beginning? And this is something you have learned from drama and not from going to school?

Thato: Yes

Ella: How do you know, why do you think is that?

Thato: Am, school, like the school is there to guide and lead you into the correct path. But drama shows and gives you the aspects that happen in life. Such as the killings, the what-what and the what-what. You can ask, and you get that information, and you make something out of it. Unlike, going to school, learning, going to school and so forth, but doing drama, you get that information, you use your creativity and create something [...]

Thato, in the above extract makes a distinction between school education “lead[ing] you to a correct path” and drama education showing “the aspects that happen in life”. The didactic approach at school – giving readymade answers to how one should live their lives – was described by many other drama participants too. One should respect their elders, and not run away from home, was some of the advice frequently given to participants at school. Thato’s words suggest that at drama they are able, by learning “the real aspects” of life, to form their own opinions about how to live their lives better. David also says that doing drama inspired him to think about how to live his life:

Because I learn things, I get used to different things, and it *shows*, it tells me about the world, what is going around in this world. So yeah, it gives me an idea of, how, what to do when I grow up, what should I do that is rightful.

The drama participants wanted to live righteous lives, but they wanted to figure out what is “right” on their own. As can be observed from the examples of the changed understanding about the causes of migration and the phenomenon of street children, what the drama participants thought was “right” was not the same as what their teachers and parents had told them. The interviewees from the drama group expressed that by learning about the world, they could see better what is righteous and what is not, and how they would like to act based on this understanding.

5.2.4 Finding one’s priorities

One of the issues frequently brought up by the participants was the drama group acting as a counter-force to peer-pressure. Some of the participants even recounted that they had at some point stopped doing drama for a while, because they ‘became influenced by friends’. The participants generally drew a line between their friends at

the drama group and the activities they did together, and the school friends, who engaged in 'less productive' activities. One of the drama participants said drama had taken him out of the streets from doing small crimes like shoplifting, and that that is the best thing that had happened to him. Some of the ACP members, too, talked about peer pressure, but connected that to teenage years. Thus, they did not speak about the ACP as a counterforce to the peer pressure currently. Tinyiko, one of the members of the drama group, described her feelings about the social group at the drama project as opposed to the social surrounding at school this way:

Tinyiko Yeah. For me it's different [being with school friends as compared to the friends from drama], because like some of the children they, you know that after school they hang out with friends, they drink and stuff. So, normally at school it's like, your friends, it's not really those friends that you want to be with because normally they judge you, or influence you to bad things. So, if you have a chance, instead of- because here we're only talking about positive things, while there it's normally negative topics and stuff, so it's different.

Ella Okay. What are these positive things that you talk about?

Tinyiko Like normally, eish, what can I say. Am, like topics we talk about here – you usually *learn* about things. Normally you learn about people here, and about things, while there with your friends, it's sort of like the negative topics, it's a lot of like about dating, or drinking, smoking or – so it's very different.

Tinyiko first emphasised the different kind of communication and way of being with the friends at school, as opposed to the friends in the drama group. She said the topics they talked about in school were *negative* and the ones in the drama group *positive*. She further elaborated that at school they talked about dating, drinking, and smoking, and other things that she felt are of bad influence, while in the theatre they “*learn about people and things*”.

The drama group participants' comparisons of the drama group and the outside social relations were very similar to those of Zanele Suzan Mzaku's research interviewees': “I just decided to go there just to avoid meaningless gossip in my neighbourhood and then I found people dancing, singing and all that” (Miriam Maphalala in an interview by Mzaku, 2013, 47).

The question of peer pressure and its relation to the drama activity is important, because it involves a question of choice. What is it that I want to do? Where do I want to spend my time? The choice between drama and other friends was articulated by David in this way, when asked what kind of challenges he has faced in doing drama:

It's like, friends and the parties. I used to go to parties, I used to go out often. But it's like, now it's like- I have to, I have to *choose*. Now it's the choice. Sometimes it happens that on a Saturday I would have to go to a party, and, I would have to go to the rehearsals. It gives me an idea of okay: If I'm going to a party, what am I going to benefit, what am I going to learn from that party?

In this extract, David elaborates on a choice he had to make in terms of his time and commitment. What is connected to this choice, is goals, and goal-orientation.

5.2.5 Specificity of Mutuzo

What Mutuzo meant for the cast, was different from the case of similar productions – with casts of approximately the same size and age, with the same director, and in the same theatre. Nkhesane – who had been part of two productions prior to Mutuzo, both with the same director, Sis Llebogang – said that her experience of Mutuzo was unique in a positive way, because the previous projects had had “problems with the cast”. She elaborated that some participants did not take the play seriously, and that they had not had as good a team spirit as what they had in Mutuzo. Therefore, even though this production was clearly very positive and educative experience for this cast, it was special in the narrations of the cast members. This project differed from the previous productions not only because of a different cast, but also because of the topic of the play. The topic of this play invited the participants to share and to discuss deep questions, which perhaps made them closer to each other.

The previous projects, which Nkhesane and a few other Mutuzo cast members had been part of, were about street children in South Africa, and racism in South Africa. The latter’s plot included a metaphoric soup – representing all of South Africa – and a

fight by the spices – representing blacks and whites – over who is the most important ingredient in the soup. From the description by Nkhesane, and the way the interviewees talked about the topics limited to South African history and politics, it is tempting to ask whether it was the geographical distance of Mutuzo, which actually allowed cast members to process the painful issues that “hit home”?

Gerard Hagg wrote already fifteen years ago, just after the end of apartheid, that young people in general have not been keen to learn the traditional cultural forms, because those are associated with “apartheid and backwardness” (Hagg 2002, 194). The drama participants all complained about the boredom that overwhelms them when they study apartheid at school: “everyone knows about apartheid, who doesn’t know about apartheid”, as David put it. It seemed that the participants did not find apartheid an important or interesting topic. This was despite the interviewees recognizing that the legacy of apartheid does not disappear in a decade or two. Yet, the play had inspired them to analyse apartheid from a different angle, that of racism that extends beyond the South African borders, and that analysis made the topic of apartheid more interesting for them. If learning about apartheid in school and in the insulated South African context provokes such hostility among the youth, drama or other artistic methods could provide more meaningful ways for discussing the topic. This invites for further research, where one could look at the way the local and personal issues are processed through drama when the topic is explicitly close to home, as compared to when the issue is located, either geographically, or in other measures, further away from the cast, but which resonates with the cast members’ personal lives.

Yet another difference between this play and the previous ones was that the cast members were now older, and that the facilitator was more experienced, and that some of the cast members had known each other for a longer time than during the earlier plays, which makes it likely that they felt more familiar, and thus perhaps more comfortable with each other, which allowed for more trusting relationships.

5.3 Projects’ impacts in comparison

While the two projects both increased the sense of freedom for the participants, taught them multiple skills, and provided them with a safe environment to be vulnerable and to receive emotional support and practical advice, there were some differences in how all of this happened, and in the kinds of learning and support that took place.

In the drama project, the theme of the play played a huge role in determining the subjects of learning; xenophobia, apartheid, race and other African countries. An important method of learning was role-playing, through which the drama participants delved deep into the hypothetical experience of their characters. To do this, they sought understanding of the issues of violence, ranging from sexual abuse to racist violence. Understanding of these issues came for a great part from discussions with the cast members, when they shared their painful personal experiences with each other¹⁵. Also, visits by other people to the project, as well as movies and the internet, were important sources of information for the cast members.

In the ACP, the participants shared their personal struggles with each other to some extent, too, but there was no such element as the role-taking, which would have required them place their personal experience to a wider structural issue. However, there was one interviewee, who shared her personal painful story with me in an interview, and connected it to the structural problem of child abuse in South Africa. Connecting personal problems to wider structural issues is by no means tied to the kind of learning techniques that were place in the drama group. However, the strength of social groups like the drama group – where personal problems are shared, and where people from different socio-economic backgrounds come together – is that members can learn to empathise with people from different socio-economic backgrounds. In a segregated society like South Africa is, these kinds of spaces are not abundant, which fact makes the drama group a special case. Even though the beneficiaries of the groups were all black, at least in socio-economic terms it managed to bring young people with different backgrounds together to learn from each other.

¹⁵ The cast members told me they discussed these issues, and shared these issues, but I did not personally enquire about them, or hear them talking about them.

Also, the great intensity of the practice sessions, and a common goal of performing and competing, glued the drama group members tightly to each other. This influenced also the interviews with the drama group members, as seeing them practice, perform, and hang out with each other as well as knowing the plot of the play, provided me with a lot of material to ask questions about. The drama participants were of similar age and had many things in common, which is why it was also easier to grasp who they were and what issues were important to them, than was the case with the ACP group. I conducted twice as many interviews with the drama group than with the ACP, which helped in understanding them better both as individuals and as a group.

Even though the ACP participants did not report to have learned so much about structural issues like racism or politics, what both projects had in common regarding learning about “bigger problems” was that the *gaze* of the participants widened to include a bigger picture than one’s most immediate surroundings. Lisa, in an interview, described how the project had evolved during the over ten years of its existence. Whereas in the beginning, the project participants seemed to be very strangled by their problems, with time, the participants started to see further than their personal problems, and began taking more initiative in the project. This was exemplified by a project about South African rhinos, which the ACP participants, concerned about poaching, wanted to undertake.

5.4 Project spaces as home

While the previous sections presented a variety of outcomes from the ACP and drama projects to their participants, in this section I delve deeper to the overarching finding of the study, which is the home-like atmosphere of the project, and its impact on the participants. Both the drama and the arts and crafts project participants repeatedly used terms “home” and “family” when describing their connection to the project space and its people. For Lerato, the ACP was a ground-breaking experience. She said that in

this project she “learned to love”, and to “lean on someone”. She learned to be with people, to network, to “treat” them – to treat them with respect, but also to express herself to them in a constructive manner.

In addition to feeling “at home”, the project participants reported that they felt “free” to express themselves, they felt there was no “stress” in the projects, and that they could be “themselves”. These narratives were prominent in both projects:

When you're in the rehearsals, you can be free, you can say anything, whatever you say, people will understand what she's talking about, so, it's, you're free to do- So that's how I gained my confidence. Because you become free of what you can say and yeah so, I felt like I was free to do anything. (Tinyiko, drama participant)

Well you know at school sometimes you're that person who wants to be quiet all the time, not raising your hand when you're asked a question. Yeah well you know, in drama you get to raise your hand and you get to be free- to speak freely and stuff. (Nkhesane, drama participant)

One thing I like about [the ACP] is friends. We're friends and sometimes you see, we have problems, but immediately when we get in the project, you feel they are solved. Even though they are not really solved, but you feel released, you know. So, I just feel like I have family, I have friends, I have everything you know. Yeah. I don't have to stress when I'm here, I'm just, I'm just myself. (Lerato, ACP participant)

In the narratives of the drama and ACP participants, one can distinguish three separate, albeit partly intertwined aspects of the project culture, which contributed to their sense of freedom in the projects. These are:

- 1) having a sense that other project members *know you*;
- 2) the feeling of being *free* to be oneself, outside of imposed categories, and;
- 3) the feeling of being *at home*.

I will discuss the sense that other project members *knew* the participants using theories of bell hooks and Paulo Freire, who emphasise the importance of seeing persons for “who they really” are. The second aspect of being free to express oneself and be respected regardless of one’s background is analysed with Martha Nussbaum’s central capability number 7B,

Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being able to be treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. This entails, at a minimum, protections against discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, religion, caste, ethnicity, or national origin. [...] (Nussbaum 2000, 78–80)

The third articulation, the “sense of home” is analysed through Sara Ahmed’s concept of “orientation” (Ahmed 2006). Orientation captures the importance of space (both social and material) for the sense of being “free”. All these three aspects contribute to the participants’ sense of freedom in the projects, but approach it from different angles.

5.4.1 The feeling that “people know you”

The themes of hatred, xenophobia, violence and crime, death, and departing from the loved ones were all present in the plot of drama group’s play, in parallel with more subtle topics of human cruelty and incompleteness. When stepping into the shoes of their characters and doing research for the play, the participants connected the problems their characters had, to hardships in their own lives. When conducting research on how the conflict affected the lives of their characters, the drama participants ended up discussing their personal experiences with the group. This made the participants get familiar with each other’s personal histories very well.

Ella: If you, now that you said you used to be the quieter one at school, and speak more freely at drama, ah, do you feel you are a different person in these two spaces?

Nkhesane: Yeah! [laughs], I'm quite unique [laughter]

Ella: Unique?

Nkhesane: Yeah well I'm supposed to be doing singing and stuff, because that's my talent [gives a laughter], but then you know in drama, you get to do all that in the same place, yeah, so, I get to sing there, stuff, yeah

Ella: So do you, do you feel that you can, you can somehow utilise more holistically your talents in drama? [N: Yeah.] Yes. In school, it's only important if you know what certain calculation you should or- [N: yeah], yeah... Do you feel that at school it doesn't matter so much like, what kind of a person you are-

Nkhesane: Well, I could say that 'cause you know in drama, they all care about who I am, where I come from, and yeah, what happens in my life - if you go to school, nobody really cares about what happens in my life. All they care is okay she is always here, she's that, she's doing that, she's doing that, yeah, that's all

Ella: Yeah. Do you feel that at school also with your friends or, between you and the teacher? [Silence.] Or, do you feel that at school your friends don't care so much about where you come from, and who you are?

Nkhesane: Yeah, I do

The drama group members, like the arts and crafts members, spoke very much about the fact that they share their problems with each other. Nkhesane, a 14-year-old participant, had joined the theatre in January 2014, and had participated in three plays before joining the Mutuzo cast in September. With Nkhesane, we talked about the previous plays, and she recounted that in the previous productions, they had had problems within the cast; the cast members did not listen to each other and did not respect each other. I asked what made Mutuzo different from the other plays she had been part of:

Ella Okay. How was that play for you, M-

Nkhesane Mutuzo? Oh, wow! Mutuzo made me learn a lot. Yeah. Great cast, great people there. When there's a conflict, we resolve it together. Ah, we sit down as a cast. Yeah, I learned a lot, yeah

Ella Yeah. When you have a conflict in the group?

Nkhesane Yeah, yeah. And actually, like you know, can I say? Sharing emotions- Yeah. It's kind of a good thing you know when you are stranded by yourself and then your cast wants to help you out of it. Yeah, yeah.

Ella Yeah! So, you feel that this cast was different from the previous ones in that sense?

Nkhesane Yeah, yeah

Ella: Okay. Do you have an idea why, why was that?

Nkhesane: Hmh, we've got a great director

Ella: Yeah. But she was also directing the previous ones?

Nkhesane: Yeah. But then you know, those other times there were some people who were still you know, yeah. So in this cast I could say, I feel like I'm at home when I'm with them...Like my second family

Ella: Yeah, that's what many of you said after the play and- Yeah. Uhum, would you like to describe- you said you shared emotions and so, would you like to describe one of those occasions to me? Or conflicts, you also mentioned-

Nkhesane: Okay. Well, it was before the performance last Saturday. We were sitting before we were performing, and we didn't really take the play seriously. So, and then Thesh, one of our cast members, she cried after the whole play. So it got- [E: After the rehearsals?] Yeah. So, then we started thinking, and then Llebogang told us: "One day, you will feel the pain that she felt". And, for *real*, the next day we all felt that pain after the performance. Looking at the audience cry and stuff, yeah. And we got to look back to *our* real lives, like, our families... Yeah. And then before the audience walked in, we rehearsed. So, after the rehearsals we were crying more. Yeah, so, we got to talk about our families, what happens in our families, yeah. Things like that... So, the play is also, am, it also reminds you of where you come from.

What was remarkable in the narrations of the drama group members was that according to many of them, this cast was different from any other group they had been in. The difference they pointed out to explain this was that in this group they were more connected to the other members than in the other groups. Nhlamulo, a 17-year old participant had participated in another theatre group before changing to this one:

Ella: Are you happy that you came here?

Nhlamulo: Extremely happy

Ella: What are the things that make you happy?

Nhlamulo: What I'm doing, makes me happy. And the relationships between us make me happy

Ella: Was it different in the theatre you were before?

Nhlamulo: No, it wasn't different, but I didn't feel like I was part of it, so I decided to come here

Ella: What is it that makes you so connected to this cast?

Nhlamulo: I don't know... Well, they are friendly. That's the first thing, they are friendly. And then we share our problems. If I have a problem, I would go to one of them, and tell her. She, or he maybe, gives me advice

Famous teacher, feminist, and social activist, bell hooks, in their book "Teaching to Transgress" (hooks 1994), writes in the context of the United States about the black teachers of her school, before the black children were made to join the de-segregated school, where they felt as second class citizens, and where the teaching was not inspiring for her anymore. She writes that the black teachers in her previous school were "on a mission [...] to resist every strategy of white racist colonization", and that "[t]o fulfil that mission, my teachers made sure they 'knew' us. They knew our parents, our economic status, where we worshipped, what our homes were like, and how we were treated in the family"¹⁶ (hooks 1994, 2–3). Her love for school was lost the moment she, now in the desegregated school, mainly taught by white teachers, realized that the education in the new school was no more about the "practice of freedom", but "about obedience" (hooks 1994, 3).

In this anecdote about her education, bell hooks connects the kind of education she experienced had been "about the practice of freedom", to the teachers *knowing* the students; knowing their backgrounds, and knowing what was going on in their lives. She had felt safe in the environment, where the teachers knew her story beyond her academic performance in the class. She was seen, by the teachers, as a person with a whole range of factors affecting her life - not only as a student, like she felt she was perceived as in the desegregated school. This passage suggests that to be seen holistically as a person – a living, feeling, and thinking being inhabiting many arenas of life, and not being reduced to the narrow role of a pupil – contributed to her sense of freedom. In addition to hooks' teachers seeing the pupils holistically, they were also interested in their backgrounds. In the de-segregated school the teachers practiced what Paulo Freire would have called "banking education", where a "man is [seen as

¹⁶ For bell hooks, and for the participants in this study, that other people *knew* them, was a positive thing. However, one can think that for example a teacher knowing their students' family backgrounds can also lead to the teacher discriminating against the student. Hence, that the others *know* one's background is enabling only if the knowledge is used sympathetically, and not against the person.

being] abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world” (Freire 1996, 62).

Like for bell hooks, for the drama participants too, it was important that the people around them *knew* who they were, and cared about the happenings in their life. The interviewees said they felt free to express themselves in the theatre, and this seems to be connected to both the feeling that the people around them knew who the participants were, and to the feeling that they were not forced into a category which did not define them well (i.e. poor, middle class, rich), as we see in the following section.

Perceiving humans holistically, as beings with physical and social, psychological, emotional, aesthetic and artistic needs, whose fulfilment is a pre-requisite for living really humanly, is an emancipatory view. It is a view that goes beyond reducing humans to any one category, and sees them as being *whole*. Seeing humans as having a variety of needs, which cannot be separated, seems to remind one of intersectionality theory. Kimberly Crenshaw, who introduced the concept of intersectionality in the 1980s, criticised the tendency of the feminist theorists of the time to “treat race and gender as mutually exclusive categories of experience and analysis” (Crenshaw 1989, 139). Intersectional approach emphasises the diversity of oppressions, none of which can be studied in isolation. An approach to development, which refuses to categorise humans into beings that need only one aspect of development – such as nutrition or shelter – at the time, highlights that humans are intersectional not only in terms of oppression, but also in terms of needs. One type of oppression, or one type of need, cannot be analysed in isolation from other oppressions or needs.

5.4.2 Freedom from categorization

In most of the interviews, the interviewees brought up a sense of freedom and home-like atmosphere in the projects. Below, a quotation from one of those interviews, conducted with three drama participants; Tinyiko, Awande, and Beatrice.

- Ella I wanted to ask about learning: do you feel you have learned something about yourself by doing drama?
- Tinyiko Yeah... I think so, because before I joined drama, I didn't have confidence and I was shy. So, when I joined drama, I sort of saw in myself that I'm gaining confidence, and also like, I'm normally that shy person, I used to be like that person who doesn't like to talk to people. When I see people, I just move away, so yeah, I was not really so... As I joined drama, I started to, yeah, gain that confidence. Yeah, yeah, that's what I've gained
- Awande Yeah. I *do* think that you learn about yourself when you come to drama. Like self-confidence, your shyness, as she said
- Ella But what- where does it come from? Is it the rehearsals you do, or is it the community, the group, like what- if you try to name the things that have helped you to become more self-confident more specifically?
- Tinyiko No, I think it's the rehearsals, because they, it's like when you're in the rehearsals, you can be free, you can say anything, whatever you say, people will understand what she's talking about, so, it's, you're free to do- So that's how I gained my confidence. Because you become free of what you can say and yeah so, I felt like I was free to do anything
- Ella Express yourself and, yeah-
- Tinyiko Yes
- Ella [To Beatrice.] Do you have the same feeling?
- Beatrice Yes
- Awande And, also the support from the group. They support you, and you can do anything, yeah.

To understand better the feeling the girls had about the drama group and their experienced freedom in it, I asked them to compare the drama group to the group of friends at school. The discussion with Tinyiko, Awande, and Beatrice continued about friendships at school and in the drama group:

- Awande At school, there's rich, there's middle class, there's poor. So there you cannot actually free yourself, or say something freely. Because there you would be looked at like, as if okay, you're rich and you feel yourself, or you're poor, so you don't have the ability to say something. But here in drama, we're taught to be *equal*. When Tinyiko lives in Sandton and we know that Sandton is rich, and I live in Yeoville, we know there is mostly thugs [T: Yeah!] there. But here we are taught to be equal
- Tinyiko & Beatrice Yeah! [Enthusiastically.]

- Beatrice In drama we have, how can I say- In drama we also *do* have the rich, the middle class and the poor, but we don't think about ourselves like that. Because she, like she said she lives in Sandton, there are some of the people we rehearse with, that they live in an orphanage (()) so we don't try- and you see, like put the topic that yeah, yeah she's rich. We don't usually talk about parents, and how rich other people are, because we see that as unfair, because they live in an orphanage, and some of us, we live in proper homes.
- Ella Uhum, yeah. Do you speak about those things in school, like whose parents are rich, or is it just that you know it by outlook?
- Awande At school we do. We do! Like you live in Sandton, okay, *wow*, my parents work there. Today I have this money, yeah- My mother works there, things like that. We *do* talk. And sometimes you know with the poor people, it makes them feel...
- Beatrice Yeah
- Awande Or maybe they bought me a new this, things like that, like clothes, maybe you can say I have a new clothing, I can come with it in the rehearsals- No, in the rehearsals we don't do that. We don't brag about things, maybe if you have new shoes, you start showing off with them, maybe you rehearse with them... No, you just take off your shoes and put them in the corner

Awande brought up an important element contributing to the sense of freedom in the drama group. She felt – and the other girls agreed, despite the fact that they come from different socio-economic backgrounds – that at school they were categorized by their peers into the “poor, the middle class, and the rich”. This categorization, in the description of the girls, implies that one is expected to behave according to the norms assigned for a person representing a particular socio-economic class, and that deviance from this norm is punished, as it is in this example, with verbal mockery. Awande says this prevents one from being free, and from expressing their emotions freely, and the other girls concur.

Awande, Beatrice, and Tinyiko, as seen in the above interview transcript, connected the sense of self-confidence and the sense of freedom to the ability to behave in a way one “wants” to, and not according to the way one is *expected* to behave. The

expectations, in this case are based on the economic class¹⁷, and they concern all the classes.

Economic class can be seen influencing lives when it comes to what they are able to do and to achieve, given the material restrictions of their lives. However, there is another aspect to how economic class influences people's lives, and that comes from the social restrictions class imposes. In the above paragraph the social restrictions concern what people can *say*. Interestingly, according to the participants' narratives, these restrictions seemed to be absent in the project space. Another interviewee from the ACP group verbalized how what she could say was restricted by the fact that her brother had been living in the streets. In this case, other people expected her to behave and to speak in a certain way, because of her family situation:

So, when my brother was a street kid, other people, when they saw me at school, they were like 'yeah, your brother, yeah, he's a street kid, we saw him at the bridge' [mimicking despising tone], you see, something like that [...] So it's very, very bad, because you can't even tell a joke. You can't even tell a joke, because immediately when you tell a joke, then they just come to you and say, 'you know what, don't even think of what-what, something, your brother is staying in the street'. So, you cannot even say a word, and obviously you cannot even continue, you'll just stop.

This interviewee, too, spoke about her sense of freedom in the ACP. She said there she could express herself and get support from the others. "You see, in [the ACP] I really get everything, and I feel I have sisters, I have mother, I have father, even though there's no-one who is older than me in like boys, they're all young, but others, I have everything, like I'm happy with them, more than what I'm with my mother."

¹⁷ Even though "class" can be defined in many ways, and in a proper class analysis should be, I am here sticking to the term "class" in the meaning the girls themselves gave to it; economic class defined by how much money a particular family/person has at their disposal. In addition to the wealth these families possess, another distinguishing feature defining class, was the residential area. Sandton in Johannesburg, is South Africa's affluent business district, where only the very wealthy can afford living, while Yeoville in the inner city has a reputation of a deprived area with a high crime rate.

One of the ACP participants also expressed that it is important for her and the others, that the facilitators don't ridicule them if they do not know how to write. Ability to write is yet another marker of class, which, when ridiculed, can be seen as discrimination based on class.

5.4.3 Orienting to the project space

To be orientated, or to be at home in the world, is also to feel a certain comfort: we might only notice comfort as an affect when we lose it, when we become uncomfortable. The word 'comfort' suggests well-being and satisfaction, but it can also suggest an ease and easiness. Comfort is about an encounter between more than one body, which is the promise of a 'sinking' feeling. To be comfortable is to be so at ease with one's environment that it is hard to distinguish where one's body ends and the world begins. One fits, and by fitting the surfaces of bodies disappear from view. (Ahmed 2007, 158.)

In the previous chapter 7.2, Tinyiko, Awande and Beatrice described their sense of lack of freedom amongst their school peers, when they are expected to behave according to their socio-economic class. In the other case the ACP participant described how her freedom to express herself was restricted by dismissing attitudes of her peers towards her, due to her brother's status as a street child.

Sara Ahmed suggests that "the moments when the body appears 'out of place' are moments of political and personal trouble" (Ahmed 2007, 159). In the examples above, the personal trouble is evident; one is punished when behaving in a way not fitting the category others have assigned to the speaker. The judgemental reaction of others has put the person "out of place", because what she said was not appropriate to the role the others had assigned to her. These two situations, to which the interviewees contrasted their sense of freedom in the projects, tell us about the oppressive structures, the "political trouble", in their living surroundings, from which they felt – at least partially – free in the project space. The "trouble" of *classism*, or economic inequality is one of these, and the other one is that of street children. In the first example, expectations based on economic class prevented the interviewees from

behaving in a way they would have liked to behave at school. They were in “wrong body” (Ahmed 2007) to say whatever they said that disturbed others and caused them to “hail” (Althusser in Ahmed 2007) these girls. In the second example, the stigma of street children, and particularly “family stigma” – a term often used in the context of families of mentally ill (Phelan, Bromet, and Link 1998) – prevented the interviewee from behaving in a way she would have wanted to. As a sister of a street child, she was in a “wrong body” to tell a joke.

In the stories described above, the project participants sought to talk and behave in a way they desired, and to express their sense of humour. These attempts were, however, interrupted, even silenced, by their school mates. The girls were ‘hailed’, to use Althusser’s term: “Hey, who do you think you are to say such things, you are poor/rich”, or “hey, you! ‘Don’t even think [you are entitled to tell a joke], your brother is staying in the street’”. Stopping a person, preventing someone from what they aspire to do because of their economic class, or because of their brother’s misfortune, is the kind of violence Ahmed writes about, though in terms of race and gender. Her analysis and concept of orientation sheds light to these situations, where the target is not hailed because of race or because of sex/gender, but because of class and because of family situation (which in the case of street children, is also intertwined with class).

It is important to note that the interviewees contrasted the occasions of being stopped by their school mates, to their experiences in the projects. They said they felt “free” to say anything in the projects, which suggests that in the projects’ space, *objects* (Ahmed 2006) were within the participants’ reach in a way less experienced at school or at home. The way participants described the project spaces as stress-free and home-like, spaces where they felt free and supported, suggests that the interviewees felt the kind of comfort described by Sara Ahmed, quoted in the beginning of this chapter.

Ahmed suggests that how bodies are oriented towards objects, depends on the space they are in. Do the project spaces “extend [the projects participants’] shape” (Ahmed 2007), and thus make the participants “sink” in the spaces (Ahmed 2007)? What is the project participant’s “shape” then? If *whites* sink in *white spaces*, because *white spaces*

extend the *shape of whiteness*, as Ahmed suggests, what is the shape of the project participants, and what is the shape of the projects' space?

In the drama space where the economic class question was brought up, there are people from different class backgrounds. Their expression of the sense of freedom in the drama group would suggest that they "sank in" in the project space, despite their different socio-economic backgrounds, which had been reason for ridicule in other (school) space. The same applies to the interview narratives from the ACP; the ACP participants also sank in in the project space. This suggests that the projects' spaces extended the shape of acceptance towards people from different socio-economic backgrounds. The interviews suggest that the culture of support and acknowledgment of privileges, which leads to practical actions, have a real life impact on how people experience the spaces in terms of safety. Practical actions described above were such as not ridiculing a person who cannot write in the ACP, or, putting new shoes in the corner in the drama group. Both of these actions diminish the impact of class in the relations between the project members, and enhance seeing each other as equal persons behind the class categories. The spaces were all black, when it comes to the skin colour of the beneficiaries. Therefore, this analysis says little about the shape of the spaces in terms of blackness and whiteness.

Ahmed notes how white phenomenologists Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty describe the body as being 'able', being motile, expressing the "I can"¹⁸, while for Frantz Fanon, a black phenomenologist, the body represents the "being not", a "bodily and social experience of restriction, uncertainty and blockage" (Ahmed 2007, 160–161). The "phenomenology of being stopped" (Ahmed 2007, 161) is precisely what happened to the interviewees when they were not allowed to express themselves in a way they would have wanted to. This *stopping* uses shame to control and despise a person.

One question to ask is, is the orientation to objects fixed for each person? Sara Ahmed suggests that how bodies are oriented towards objects depends on the space the

¹⁸ For Husserl this was the case before he was "read as being Jewish", after which "he literally lost his chair: he temporarily lost the public recognition of his place as a philosopher" (Ahmed 2007, 160).

bodies are in. For example, a person's orientation towards expressing humour can be different at home and at school, depending on how these spaces welcome the person's humour. This is affected not just by how other people react to the humour, but also by how these spaces make the person feel about themselves, thus, how this person orients towards their humour in different spaces. Hence, it is not only the other people who influence how a person orients towards something in a space, but also other attributes of the place. For example, a graveyard and a house party, are two different environments where one would likely orient to humour (or anything) differently.

Zanele Suzan Mzaku, in her MA thesis writes that "the main participants find that they are able to fit into a political and socio-economic environment that is very different to the one they experienced in their youths", due to the skills they developed in the theatre project she studied (Mzaku 2013, 82). There are hints that the drama and the ACP projects could also have contributed to how their participants fit into other environments. Nkhesane, a drama participant recounted that her increased self-confidence has positively affected her school performance, because now she is brave enough to raise her hand and speak in class. Tsholofelo from the ACP believes the skills she acquires from the project will help her to be respected in other circles, too. It can be said that the participants felt more *objects* became *reachable* during the projects. Could this felt sense of comfort in the project spaces help the participants better inhabit other spaces, too?

The ACP and the drama project familiarised their participants with different spaces and different people. The main new space was of course the project space. In addition, through the ACP and the drama project, the participants visited many spaces where they had not been previously, and where they would probably not have gone without the project. This kind of spaces were, for the ACP group such as art galleries, other NGOs' venues and organic markets. For the drama group, new spaces were performance venues located in the universities, theatres, or shopping malls. Many of the drama group members had also had a chance to travel abroad with the group once. The interviewees regarded the visits to other places as important parts of their experiences of the projects. It is likely that the visits to new places, such as universities,

as a member of a group, which was welcomed to these spaces, influences how comfortable the participants will feel in these places in the future. Thus, the earlier visits with the community centre will likely influence how the participants will *inhabit* these places, and how they will *orient to objects* in these spaces in their future visits.

Sara Ahmed's formulation of orienting to objects seems to provide an applicable analytical tool to describing the ACP and the drama project spaces. In the projects' spaces the participants were not *hailed* the way they were *hailed* outside of the projects. The project participants were, seen as whole persons, beyond artificial categorisations. The category of class was mainly pointed out in the interviews. Seeing persons for who they are, sympathetically, acknowledging their aspirations, is humanizing practice. It also allowed emancipatory action to take place in the project's spaces.

6 Discussion

In the previous chapter, I presented and analysed the findings of the empirical research. In this chapter, I highlight the main findings and discuss them further with earlier studies. I also discuss how this study relates to the theoretical framework and concepts outlined in chapters 2 and 3, and employed for the analysis in chapter 5.

As mentioned in the beginning, this research was born from a realisation that even though education, gender equality, and issues of citizenship and belonging have gained increasing attention in the development agenda from the 1990s onwards, a more holistic understanding, that includes psychological, emotional, social, artistic and aesthetic needs of a human, has not been readily visible in international development programmes. Lack of attention to these non-material aspects of development, to which making art could contribute to, led me to focus on artistic and creative action as vehicles for emancipation as the theme of this study.

The field work in a community centre in an economically deprived, ethnically diverse area in the inner city of Johannesburg from October-December 2014, spent studying its arts and crafts project (ACP) and one of its drama projects, allowed for insights into

how a contemporary understanding of development needs to acknowledge and include actions and spaces that are geared to meeting more than just the basic needs of humans beings.

The initial research question were:

- 1) What kind of effects does participating in these creative projects have in the lives of the young participants?
- 2) What kind of possibilities these projects provide for their participants, and what are their limitations?

Through a grounded theory inspired methodology, the research questions were narrowed down to those concerning emancipation, learning, and social environment in community centre arts and crafts and drama projects. The main research methods were semi-constructed in-depth interviews and observation. Altogether eighteen interviews were conducted with the projects' participants and staff; four with the ACP participants, and nine with the drama participants. In addition, I interviewed the directors of both projects, a senior crafter from the ACP project. Email conversations with the stakeholders in the projects after the field work ended helped gain further inputs.

6.1 The community (art) centre context

The focus on arts and creative action, through contextualisation to community centre arts projects, resulted in analysis of the transformative power of arts projects on their participants. The projects' social spaces came across as very important for the participants' experiences there. In addition to the social environment, the creative action carried out in the projects also played a major role in the projects' impact on the participants.

The study looks at the real-world impacts of community art centres from the perspective of development research, and therefore contributes to the literature on the importance of artistic practices and community arts centres in development. Community art projects have a history of bridging the gap between the personal and the public by engaging local communities

to tackle local issues through art (Kelahe et al. 2014). In apartheid South Africa, community art centres have played a pivotal role in making art accessible to blacks deprived of art education (Hagg 2002; Mzaku 2013). The community centre of this study corresponds the definition of community arts centre as a place providing different kinds of artistic projects to local communities with no financial or skill-based entry requirements (Hagg 2002). Like usually in South African community arts centres, also in this one, the emphasis is on socially supportive and therapeutic role of arts.

6.2 Practical Findings

This study, like those by Kelahe et. al. (2014), Matarasso (2003), and Mzaku (2013), emphasises the importance of socially supportive environment of community arts projects for the project participants. It also supports the view presented by Matarasso (1997), Mzaku (2013), and Lochner (2013), that the community art projects can have a significant, positive impact on the participants.

The research at hand analyses the impacts the two arts projects had on their participants. Due to the different type of creative activity practiced in the projects, the impacts the projects had on their participants differed in some regards. In the ACP, whose participants were 19-28 year old men and women, the main impacts reported were: learning practical crafts skills, having stress-free environment in the project, and gaining crafts skills that are hoped to contribute to being respected among family while securing a better livelihood in future.

The ACP played an important role in the lives of the young adult participants, who were trying to navigate the city and its opportunities to meet their needs for income generation, learning practical skills for future employment and networking and social skills for life. ACP was an important space where the participants could for a moment put their worries aside, and concentrate on the act of craft-making. In addition to having work to do, they also appreciated the supportive social environment. Being survivors of harsh living conditions, the project served as a very important place encouraging both trusting in oneself, and in others. Networking and working with

other projects and professionals, in the exhibitions the project's crafts products were sold in, was brought up as an important aspect of the project.

In the drama group, the project impacts derived heavily from a topic of the play the drama group was working with. The play, which was about an ethnic conflict in another African country, inspired the cast to conduct research on the themes of xenophobia and other African countries. Through role-playing, by stepping into the shoes of the characters suffering from war, the participants processed questions of race, immigration, loss, violence, and South Africa in the context of wider Africa. An important feature of the research for the play were discussions among the cast members, where participants shared their own personal stories related to the theme of the play. This emotional sharing was an important factor for the project experience, as it helped the cast members to get to know each other, and deepened the connection between them. Through this emotional sharing, also people who had not experienced the same situations as their characters, could empathise with them. Overall, the drama project enhanced the cast members' curiosity to learn about the countries in Africa, and through that, their sense of empathy towards immigrants in South Africa. Yet another important aspect of the drama project was, that as community arts projects is often hoped to do (Mirza 2006), it provided some youngsters a place to go to instead of committing small crimes like shop lifting, which in long term could lead to bigger problems.

All in all, the research participants felt the projects spaces were safe for them to express themselves, and that they learned a lot in the projects. The type of learning was influenced by the social group, the visits to other projects and visits from outsiders to the projects, as well as in the drama project's case the topic of the play.

6.3 Theoretical contemplations

6.3.1 Emancipation as a starting point

The term *emancipation* has a double role in this research. First, it is the overarching philosophical, methodological, and ethical starting point of this study, following the legacy of the Frankfurt School, which holds that the role of social science is to enhance people's emancipation (Bohman 2015). Secondly, the research analyses the arts and crafts project and the drama group in the light of human emancipation. Emancipation as an analytical tool for the research came from two directions, which influenced each other, as is often a case in an alethic hermeneutic study where the dichotomy of the researcher and the research subject is blurred, as explained in chapter 4. One direction was the sense of freedom the interviewees elaborated, therefore, the need for a concept of emancipation came from the empirical study. Another direction was seeing development as emancipation, an approach promoted by Frans Schuurman (2000), among others. For a study in the field of development studies, it is thus convenient to look at social processes from the perspective of emancipation.

Emancipation in this research refers to emancipation from social, psychological, and institutional hindrances that prevent people from expressing themselves and making decisions based on in-depth understanding. On a normative level of ends to development, it is connected to the Capabilities approach, further developed from the human development approach by Martha Nussbaum.

6.3.2 Paulo Freire meets Sara Ahmed: humanisation, emancipation, and orientating towards objects

In addition to the project-specific findings, there were significant similarities in the two projects' impact on their participants: Participants from both projects described a sense of freedom and home-like atmosphere in the projects. To analyse this warm feeling towards the projects' social environment, the concept of humanisation (Freire 1996) was employed. Seeing and treating a person as a fully human and valuable being, beyond categorisations of class, gender, race, and other identity categories, is humanising practice. Sara Ahmed's conceptualisation of "orienting towards objects" and the term *hauling*, which she has borrowed from Althusser, proved to be especially

fruitful for analysing sense of freedom the participants felt in the projects. Ahmed uses *hailing* to describe the way a person's aspirations towards reaching an object are stopped, either metaphorically or literally. In this study, I argue that humanisation and emancipation can only happen in the absence of *hailing*. The project participants contrast the project spaces to school environments, where they are *hailed* based on their class background. An example of this is from an interview with three drama participants, who described how in their school environment, what they say is controlled and ridiculed based on whether they are "poor, rich, or middle class".

As Paulo Freire says, dehumanization is an act of hindering another person's "pursuit of self-affirmation", or act of failing to "recognize others as persons" (Freire 1996, 37). Emancipation can be said to be humanisation, as it frees a person (or a community) from social and psychological hindrances, and allows them to act in a way one aspires to. This connects in an interesting way with Ahmed's formulation of orienting towards objects. Orienting towards objects, where objects are understood as not only physical, but also psychological objects, such as aspiring for a certain kind of career, is also influenced by psychological and social hindrances. In practice, the social hindrances are often judgemental reactions by others. With time, these social hindrances can become internalised to a point where, even in the absence of such social hindrances in a certain time and place, a person has developed a psychological hindrance, which limits and sometimes even completely prevents them from acting according to their aspirations. The Black Consciousness Movement struggled against this kind of internalised hindrances to cherishing the dignity and self-worth of the south African black population under apartheid (Lochner 2010).

6.3.3 Capabilities and Intersectionality

In Nussbaum's words, capabilities are the answers to the question, "What is this person able to do and to be?" (Nussbaum 2011, 20). The projects can be said to have enhanced many of the central capabilities of the participants, as formulated by Nussbaum (presented in chapter 3), especially the central capability 7B, which calls for non-discriminatory action. However, I find that the formulation of capabilities

approach is not tangible enough to grasp how the central capabilities can be advanced in practice. Ahmed's approach to pointing out interruptions, which mark dehumanising moments in real life situations, provide a more applicable tool for pointing out the main emancipatory aspect of the projects in this study, which was their non-discriminatory culture. It is interesting that Nussbaum has left out the category of "class" in the central capability 7B about affiliation, which lists identity categories often used for discrimination.

The research starts from a claim that social, emotional, and aesthetic needs, which are an integral part of being human, are often overlooked in development research and practice. Like Nussbaum says about the ten central capabilities, it is difficult, if not impossible, to arrange people's needs into a hierarchical order. In this question, the theme of this study overlaps with intersectionality theory (Crenshaw 1989).

Intersectionality theory emphasises that when looking at oppression, one cannot look at oppressive identity categories in isolation. For example, one cannot analyse the meaning of race without looking at gender or class. The findings of this research suggest the same applies to needs. For example, one cannot analyse the need for nutrition in isolation from the need for physical safety or the need for self-expression.

Even though the need for nutrition and shelter are perhaps the most important needs for one to stay alive, when one has gained steady access to these, the order of importance of the satisfaction of other needs, such as that of being loved or that of belonging to a human community, become blurry. Even though most of the research participants struggled to make ends meet each month, and many of them were also deprived of food, the main reasons for the sense of freedom they attributed to the projects, were the ability to express oneself freely, and the non-discriminatory atmosphere in the project spaces.

An approach to development, which refuses to categorise humans into beings that need only one aspect of development at a time – such as nutrition or shelter, highlights that humans are intersectional not only in terms of oppression, but also in

terms of needs. One type of oppression, or one type of need, cannot be analysed in isolation from other oppressions or needs.

6.3.4 Individual or social freedom?

As discussed in chapter 3, Karl Marx found *political emancipation* to be an inadequate definition for emancipation, as by focusing on political rights, it separates the private and the public sphere in a way that discourages collective decision making and dialogue outside of the framework of rights. He was concerned that people would not have a dialogue about what kind of social lives they want to produce and what kind of persons to become. (Schmied-Kowarzik 1998) Marx claimed that in addition to political rights, people needed to search for freedom from the enabling relations with other people, not freedom from interference from others. This approach to freedom resonates with how the projects' participants talked about their experienced sense of freedom. They connected, without exception, freedom to the other people in the projects, to "enabling relations with other people". The other people allowed them to express themselves freely, without hailing them. On the other hand, they felt free to express themselves, because they knew the other people knew them, and trusted that it was safe to allow oneself to be vulnerable and expose one's thoughts to the others.

As also discussed in chapter 3, Philosopher Roy Bhaskar has suggested that the freedom people can find lies in the realisation that an individual is one with the social and material world that surrounds them. Being one with the world around us requires one to empathise with the world around, to feel how it is to be the other. The drama project enhanced empathy towards others, especially with the help of the role-playing and dialogue the cast members had when preparing for their roles.

6.4 Research challenges

As always, even in the end of the research process, some questions remain unanswered. Some of them are due to shortcomings in the methods or question

setting, some due to practical reasons such as time restrictions. Some limitations could be overcome in future research by a better selection of methods and questions, whereas others are more ambiguous.

One of the limitations, which might have doubled as an asset, is my positionality as an outside observer, which affected how I was perceived by the interviewees. There are many factors that influenced the way the project participants and staff saw and related to me. It is impossible to know how much each factor weighed, and how exactly they influenced our encounters, but it is important to acknowledge that my gender, skin colour, Finnishness (as opposed to for example Britishness), and personality, in addition to my interview methods, among numerous other distinctions, influenced the study. In the beginning of the stay in Johannesburg, I was mugged, which influenced my own sense of safety. This made me for example take taxis to the community centre, when I did not get a ride there¹⁹. Had the mugging not happened, I would have walked or taken public transportation to the centre, which would have made me appear as a different person. Doing so would have also made it easier for me to get to the centre ad hoc, and I might have got to know the other staff members better.

Another limitation of the study was that not everyone in the projects wanted to be interviewed, as elaborated in chapter 4. Different research methods that might be more comfortable such participants, such as surveys or visual methods, could be considered for this kind of studies, so that there would be as few unheard stories as possible. On the other hand, not participating in a research is everyone's right, and the reasons behind refusal to participate in a research also provide valuable insights about the research setting and ethics.

A major challenge in the research setting was the lack of a translator. With a translator, I could have interviewed participants from the ACP, who did not feel

¹⁹ In addition to the mugging affecting my sense of safety, it also postponed the starting of the research because I had to recover my lost passport, laptop, and access card to the university, among other things. Therefore, because of the lack of time left to conduct the research, I wanted to play it safe and make sure that no more time is lost due to something like that happening again.

comfortable speaking in English as well. Also in the interviews I made, a translator might have allowed the interviews to go deeper. On the other hand, a translator would have changed the dynamics of the interview situations, and therefore it is difficult to say what would have been the eventual impact of having such a person present. The study could have also benefited from an earlier timing, as the research was conducted just before the summer holidays, which was a very busy time in the projects.

A limitation concerning the findings from the drama project is that, based on this study, we cannot say why exactly this particular drama cast provided such a fruitful platform for learning that furthered the process of emancipation. The comparisons the cast members made of this cast and of their previous experiences hint that in earlier projects, the *intensity* of learning and homelike feeling was not as high as it was in the Mutuzo cast. This study shows hints towards an answer that the cast members were friendly, and that the research topic inspired the participants to conduct research and to share their personal stories, which further connected them to each other. But could this happen with any cast, with any directing methods? Answering this question would require a comparative study with a possibly longer timeframe. On the other hand, based on this study, we also cannot say that the other drama groups and prior plays would not have enhanced learning and sense of freedom.

A longitudinal study would be required to assess the projects' impact on the participants in the long run. Zanele Suzan Mzaku (Mzaku) has studied the impact of attending a community theatre on later careers of professional performance artists. However, the main participants of her study were former community theatre actors who had a successful career in the creative industry. It would be important to study all the creative project participants over a longer term, in order to have a more overall picture of the impact of the projects. However, based on this study, we can already conclude that in the short term, the impact is remarkable.

A longer term study could also have relied more on first-hand observations on how the projects impacted the participants' lives, instead of relying on their own accounts on

the impact. On the other hand, one might argue that their own experience is what matters, and that it is unlikely that an outsider researcher could objectively see how the research participants' lives were impacted by any factor. In relying on the accounts of the interviewees, there is a risk that the interviewees repeated a dominant rhetoric of the projects, without actually realising it themselves. A researcher who stays with the projects for a longer time might be better able to recognise contradictions between what the interviewees say, and what seems to be happening in the projects.

The aim of this study was to research the meaning of the creative arts projects for the young drama and arts and crafts participants in Johannesburg. The intention behind the subject was to contrast and compare such projects in the discussions of what is development, and what these projects contribute to development. Initially, my research question focused on young artists, and on how they keep up the fire to do arts and navigate the often challenging labour markets. This choice was guided by the critique that especially development scholars have a tendency to study "the poorest of the poor", and are thus part of constructing a certain kind of discipline (of development studies) and worldview, which could be seen as fetishising the poor. I thought that by not deliberately choosing to study "the poor", I may be able to avoid further constructing development studies as a field which is only interested in the poor, perhaps in disconnection with how the poor end up being poor. In the end, I ended up having a research setting, where most of the research participants come from underprivileged backgrounds, and still struggle to make the ends meet. However, studying poor people is not the same than fetishizing the poor. Development studies should not avoid studying real life effects of poverty, but on the contrary, it should avoid defining poor people by their poverty so that the real, fully human person disappears under the category of *poor*.

Concluding remarks

The findings of this study show that both the drama and the arts and crafts project participants had a very positive perception of the community centre arts projects.

Qualitatively, the projects were quite different, which is why their impact on the participants also varied to some extent. However, interview analyses highlight that the most important aspects of both projects – despite their qualitative differences – were learning and a feeling of “being at home”.

As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, earlier research suggests that community arts, both when perceived by an audience, and when been created by target groups, can, and is hoped to, provide solutions to social and economic problems such as of exclusion, criminal behaviour, and educational underachievement. This study supports these earlier findings. In addition, it highlights the importance of studying and creating socially supportive spaces, if the goals such as learning, cohesion and enhanced self-confidence are to be achieved. The study connects community arts projects to discussions of emancipation and development, and suggests that for achieving development, it is crucial that people feel free to express themselves.

As Shakuntala Banaji reminds us, “creativity is not a substitute for social justice” (Banaji, 43). However, this study supports the claim, already made by many (see for example Matarasso 1997, Lochner 2011, Mzaku 2013), that creativity, especially when cultivated in socially supportive groups, can enhance social justice. Creative projects, such as the ones this study focuses on, can enhance the experienced justice by providing spaces where people are not unjustly stopped, simply because their relatives live on the streets, or because they are poor, or because they are rich. These experiences of being seen as real and equal human beings, can contribute to recovering a person’s dignity, make them more resilient towards the challenges of life, and more daring towards reaching their goals. This study also shows that community centres like can provide a venue for learning and feeling safe, which is crucial especially for children and young people, who for many reasons do not receive the support and care they need in their homes or at school.

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